

STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF DAVID

Taught in Ambassador's Class of Peninsula Bible Church, Palo Alto, California

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by

Robert H. Roe, Pastor

I Samuel, Chapter 16:1-15 Lesson #3 April 22, 1979

Today we begin a look into the life of David. We have looked at Saul, a man of God, chosen by God to rule, and have seen how he was "disqualified." In Chapter 16, we will look at another man of God who was chosen by God to rule. This time, however, we will see a man who, though not sinless and with all the failings, foibles and tendency to do stupid things that you and I have, yet was a man after God's own heart. God rejected Saul as king and accepted David as king, and both of them performed very badly; a striking illustration of the fact that God accepts us because we are his and not because we perform. Our performance is something in addition to our acceptance. Later when Samuel is called up from the dead, he says to Saul, "Tomorrow you and your sons [one of whom was Jonathan, a tremendously godly man] will be with me." So God did not reject Saul as Saul. He rejected him for the purpose for which he had been called. That is disqualification [I Corinthians 9:24-27] not loss of salvation.

David's performance is as bad as, if not worse than, Saul's, but he is not "disqualified." The difference between these two is the attitude of the heart. When Saul was confronted with disobedience, he either rationalized or blamed somebody else. He never accepted the discipline of God. David, on the other hand, commits murder, adultery, is vicious, cruel, bloody, and emotionally unstable, but when God puts the finger on him, he cracks. He just breaks. No arguments! No rationalizations! He repents. Now, until God puts the finger on him, he rationalizes, but when he is confronted, he breaks every time. David really wants to be God's man. He is not quite sure how to go about it, but inherently that is what he wants. This is the only difference between these two kings. One is disqualified. One is called "a man after God's own heart."

That is not to say that God winks at bad behavior. David must face the consequences of his rebellion or his stupidity. His household is destroyed. The seeds he sows in Solomon's life wipe out the kingdom. Solomon begins as an extraordinary man of God and ends up a tyrant estranged from his God. There is no escaping the consequences of rebellion, but also there is no escaping the love, the grace, the mercy and the acceptance of God.

Let us look, now, at the beginning of Chapter 16. We know from Chapter 15 that Samuel is grieving over Saul. He has left him and has no more contact with him, even though they live only a few miles apart. Only at the end of Saul's life, when Samuel is called back from the dead, do they meet again. Remember how rejected Samuel felt when the people insisted on a king? But God instructed him to anoint Saul as king, and he did. In public! Now Saul has been "disqualified." It would appear to Israel that Samuel is not a very good prophet, so he is grieving not only over the loss of Saul, but probably over the loss of face also.

Chapter 16, Verse 1, God rebukes him:

Now the LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel?" [You are acting contrary to what I have chosen to do] Fill your horn with oil, and go; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have selected a king for Myself among his sons." But Samuel said, "How can I go? When Saul hears of it, he will kill me." And the LORD said, "Take a heifer with you, and say, 'I have come to

sacrifice to the LORD.' And you shall invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall anoint for Me the one whom I designate to you."

There was nothing wrong with Israel requesting a king. God made provision for it in Deuteronomy. He knew such a day would come. The issue was the kind of king they wanted. In Deuteronomy 17:14-20, look at God's qualifications for a king, verse 14 of Chapter 17:

When you enter the land which the LORD your God gives you, and you possess it and live in it [Moses is addressing the Israelites on the eastern side of the Jordan. This was Deuteronomy, the second giving of the Law, a recapitulation of all that God had done. It was the funeral oration of Moses, in a sense, because he died shortly afterward], and you say, "I will set a king over me like all the nations who are around me." [One] you shall surely set a king over you whom the LORD your God chooses [He is to be chosen of God] [Two] one from among your brothers, [It says "countrymen" here, but literally it is your brothers.] you shall set as king over yourselves; you may not put a foreigner over yourselves who is not your brother. [He must be one of you, a Jew.] [Three] Moreover, he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor shall he cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, since the LORD has said to you, 'You shall never again return that way.' [Four] Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; [Five] nor shall he greatly increase silver and gold for himself ["for himself," "for himself," "for himself." He is not to use the office to personal advantage. He is to be God's representative to the people and is not to be somebody special]. [Six] Now it shall come about when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself a copy of this law on a scroll in the presence of the Levitical priests [an exact copy]. And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, by carefully observing all the words of this law and these statutes, [He is to be a man of the Word of God. The law of God is to rule supreme over the king and, through him, over the nation.] that his heart may not be lifted up above his countrymen [The king is to be a servant of the people, not their lord. There is to be only one Lord in Israel, Yahweh. So, as a prophet is to speak for Yahweh to the people, and a priest is to mediate for the people to Yahweh, the king is to rule as a vicar, or deputy, for Yahweh.] and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, to the right or the left; in order that he and his sons may continue long in his kingdom in the midst of Israel.

Those are the rules that God laid down for the king of Israel. We will see that David fulfills these requirements. We saw that Saul did not. Although Saul was a big kingly man, from the valiant tribe of Benjamin, a tremendous leader and warrior, freeing a lot of Israel from the enemy, he was not a man of God, not a man of the Word, and not a servant. He was, however, the king that Israel wanted and so God gave him to them.

Now God is going to return to the rules of Deuteronomy 17, and we will see his king out of the tribe of Judah, David.

At this time, the Ark was not in a central sanctuary. It had just been brought back from the Philistines, who had captured it, and it was being kept in Kirjath-jearim, a few miles northeast of Jerusalem. As a result, Samuel regularly traveled around sacrificing for the people and drawing them to God. So, when God wanted David anointed, he told Samuel to just take a heifer and go down and sacrifice as he normally did. He was then to invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and God would designate the person to be anointed.

By this time, and in spite of the fact that he had been set aside by God, Saul is apparently willing to commit murder to retain his place on the throne. [He does, in fact, murder all the priests of God except one, as we will see.] Here is a perfect picture of the flesh in action. It will do anything to maintain its hold. Either you reign or it reigns. There is no halfway mark.

Chapter 16:4:

So Samuel did what the LORD said, and came to Bethlehem. And the elders of the city came

trembling to meet him and said, "Do you come in peace?" And he said, "In peace; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Consecrate yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice." He also consecrated Jesse and his sons, and invited them to the sacrifice.

You will remember that the priest, the king and the prophet were all equal in God's eyes. Therefore, Samuel, a prophet from the tribe of Ephraim, had all the authority of God in Bethlehem of Judah, and the Israelites knew it, as witness by their fear of him. You notice, also, that the man of God, appointed over the sheep of God, is to be a servant to those sheep and not their lord.

I am a pastor and elder of Peninsula Bible Church. My authority, however, comes from the Word of God and my servitude. The moment I begin to lord it over the flock is the moment I lose my authority. I can exercise tyrannical authority, but I no longer have authority from God. Israel may have had a king, but Samuel, as a servant of God, exercised tremendous authority as long as he continued to be a servant. When God said, "Go anoint." He went and anointed. He may have pleaded with God not to let Saul murder him, which is a very human feeling, but when God indicated, "Don't worry. I'll take care of that. Go!" He went. As you see, the concept of leadership in the church is totally different from the concept of leadership in the world.

After Samuel had consecrated Jesse and his sons and had made the sacrifice, he proceeded to search for the one to be anointed and again God rebukes him.

Chapter 16, verse 6:

Then it came about when they entered, that he looked at Eliab [Jesse's eldest son, one of Saul's warriors, and apparently a big husky fellow who looks like a king should look] and thought, "Surely the LORD's anointed is before Him." But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." Then Jesse called Abinadab' [the second son, also one of Saul's warriors], and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one." Next Jesse made Shammah [the third son, another one of Saul's warriors] pass by. And he said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one." Thus Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. But Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen these."

The Lord looks upon the heart, not the outward appearance. Every once in awhile when you look in the mirror and say, "Isn't God fortunate that I am available today," remember I Corinthians 1:26ff:

Consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised, God has chosen, the things that are not, that He might nullify the things that are, that no man should boast before God.

This is resurrection power. This is what God has in mind for David.

It is often said that because someone is weak and perhaps having emotional problems he grasps at Christianity as a panacea. Well, those are the ones the Lord uses. One of the pastors, much used of God, at Menlo Park Presbyterian Church just put out a tape on fear. All of his life he has had a deep problem with fear. Every Sunday he is terrified. Every Friday and all day Saturday his wife reassures him about his message, but every Sunday he is terrified. The moment he begins to proclaim the Word of God, however, God honors his message. He once said, "I guess I am going to be frightened all the rest of my life. Here I am called to be a preacher, and I am terrified of preaching." This is what I Corinthians is talking about.

The word for fear of circumstances or of people and for "fear" of God is the same word in the original. The word is phobos (fobos). We get the word "phobia" from it. It can mean a fear that totally debilitates, or it can mean a reverential awe. When I am in fear of man, I have a phobia. I am bound and cannot act. When I have a reverential awe of God, however, anything that God chooses is possible. It is my choice. Fear of man can give

me a phobia and I will be "fearful" while "fearing." But if I "fear" God and am a man of God, I will be "fearless" while "fearing." Same word; two variations. Big difference!

Now in Chapter 16, verse 11, we get to David:

And Samuel said to Jesse, "Are these all the children?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, and behold, he is tending the sheep." Then Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here."

Let us slip in a little background here to see perhaps why David was the man he was. In I Chronicles 2 and II Samuel 17, we find that he was the son of Jesse's second wife. Jesse's first seven sons were probably by his first wife, and then, assuming she died, he married again to a woman who had previously been the wife of Nahash. She had two daughters by Nahash, Zeruiah and Abigail. David probably was much younger than his sister Zeruiah, was probably a step-brother to all the other brothers, and was quite possibly much younger than anyone else in the family, which would make him runt of the litter and earn him that kind of treatment. His brothers, particularly Eliab, did not like him [as we will see when we study David & Goliath] and probably picked on him continually.

Samuel had already offered the public sacrifice in the city of Bethlehem. Now came the private feast. He had personally invited Jesse and his sons to share the priestly portion of the sacrifice with him. A great honor! This was the special private affair that happened to a family maybe once in a lifetime, and as you see, Jesse did not even mention David until Samuel insisted. [It is possible that David's treatment by his brothers and his father was the reason he was such a poor father. He indulged his sons every whim. He never said no, and it destroyed them.] We do not want to judge David too harshly when we see the terrible things he does. If we place his actions against his background, we may be able to understand why the grace of God intervenes and why God does not judge him as we would.

God allowed much the same thing in his Son's childhood. In a small community, Jesus was known as a bastard and was sung about by drunkards. He had to support his family at an early age with hard physical labor in a crummy little caravan town like Nazareth. He was kept in humble grinding poverty until he was 30 years old. He was also probably hated by his brothers. The gospels tell us that the whole family tried to have him taken into custody because they thought he was insane. In John, Chapter 7, his brothers tried to get him killed. Knowing he could not go to Jerusalem because the Jews were out to kill him, they bait him with, "No one who does the things you do doesn't want to go down to Jerusalem." James, the brother closest in age to Jesus, had probably suffered all his life in comparison to Jesus. Then at age 30, Jesus takes on the religious authorities, violates the Sabbath and probably makes it difficult for James with the local Rabbi. I can feel for James and so could the Lord Jesus. In the list of personal appearances of Jesus Christ risen from the dead, two of them are very individual; the appearance to Peter who denied him three times after saying, "I will never desert you," and the appearance to James, his brother. As a result of that visit, James became head of the Jerusalem church, James the Just, and died for his Lord.

Chapter 16, Verse 12:

So he [Jesse] sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, [reddish, which means he had red hair. It was highly prized in the Middle East where black hair predominated] with beautiful eyes and a handsome appearance [Chapters 17 and 18 indicate he was also very swift and very strong.] And the LORD said, "Arise, anoint him; for this is he."

When David is finally brought in, we are told he is good looking and also strong. Out in the wilderness, God has been preparing him to be a king. All alone with the sheep, no one else to depend on, totally debased, a miserable childhood, he pours out his heart to God and fellowships with him. This is exactly the kind of person God says he uses. Everything about this young man seems to coincide with I Corinthians 1:26ff, and this is the man God chooses.

Chapter 16, Verse 13:

Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers [or "from among his brothers." This can also be translated "from among." I suspect they were not present. They probably passed through and out]; and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward [Here is the filling of the Spirit. David is now filled and empowered in a special way to do the work that God has called him to]. And Samuel arose and went to Ramah.

There are differences of opinion among noted Bible authorities on the enabling of the Spirit in Old Testament times. My theology, and I believe it is consistent with what Scripture teaches although there are fine theologians who disagree with me, is that the Spirit of God did not indwell believers in the Old Testament. He filled them. He empowered them, but he came and went. He does it with David. He did it with Saul.

Whenever believers were open to God and the Spirit of God filled and empowered them, however, they experienced the same depths of relationship to God that we experience. The Psalms portray that. The walk of Abraham with God portrays that. Moses portrays that, as does David. In the Old Testament there was no sacrifice for sins of willfulness. So, when David was confronted by God for murder and adultery, he should have died under the Old Testament covenant. He said, "With offerings and sacrifices you are not pleased, but a broken and contrite heart you will not despise." That is all he offered and that is what his God accepted. Which shows David had an intimate knowledge of his God. In II Samuel 12:13, Nathan the prophet told him, "The Lord...has taken away your sin, you shall not die."

In the New Testament, [with the coming of the Spirit of God, John 14 through 16], the Spirit now indwells believers. Romans 8:9b says, "But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to him." This time the Paraclete, [the "one who walks alongside to help"], will be "walking alongside" in the believer. Christ said, "If I go away, I will send another one just like me." The "helper, comforter, intercessor" now lives inside the believer forever. The filling of the Spirit gives all the fruit of the Spirit whether in the Old Testament or the New Testament. The fruit of the Spirit is eternal because the Spirit is eternal.

So David is anointed and the Spirit of God comes upon him.

Chapter 16, Verse 14:

Now the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit [literally a spirit of evil] from the LORD terrorized him. Saul's servants then said to him, "Behold now, an evil spirit from God is terrorizing you. Let our lord now command your servants who are before you. Let them seek a man who is a skillful player on the harp; and it shall come about when the evil spirit from God is on you, that he shall play the harp with his hand, and you will be well."

God takes the Spirit of God from Saul and gives it to David, and he sends literally a "spirit of evil." I do not think this is a demon but rather an angel that God sends to trouble Saul. You could say that the spirit ["the destroyer", Exodus 12:23] that God sent to Egypt to kill all the first born was a spirit of evil as far as the Egyptians were concerned.

There is a New Testament principle at work here, again out of Corinthians. God is not trying to make Saul a manic depressive, which is what he becomes. Heights and depths! Heights and depths! God does indeed send this spirit. Even Saul's courtiers recognize this. [The word "servants" has the idea of those around him, the courtiers.] But God, in his grace, is trying to kill Saul's flesh. The flesh is Saul's problem, and God knows it. In I Corinthians, Chapter 5 what did Paul command them to do to a Christian who was living with his father's wife, a sin that even the Gentiles would not permit themselves? [Fornication everyday but not incest.] Paul says, "Deliver his body to Satan that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." This is an Old Testament principle in that New Testament passage. God is delivering Saul over to the spirit that will drive him to despair. In order to get Saul's attention, God plans to wipe out everything he clings to. God really loves Saul. He wants him to know what is going on and to know this is not a punishment for his disobedience. God is doing this because he loves Saul and yearns to bring him back into a relationship with himself.

The same is true today. God so loves us that he will go to any length necessary, up to and including physical

illness, or even death [I Corinthians 11:29-30], to woo us back, but he never leaves us in the dark when he does it. He did not in I Corinthians. He did not here. All the courtiers knew, and they told Saul, "Behold now, an evil spirit from God is terrorizing you."

Next time we will see how God brings David into the palace. In his sovereignty, he has the very man who is to be replaced bring his replacement anointed into the palace.

Prayer:

Father, we thank you now for your Word. We are just thankful for the way it shows particularly your love and your grace toward us for we are all Sauls at heart, Father. We are Davids too. We have ups and downs, but none of us can perform properly without you whether we are up or down. We still have a fleshly relationship with you at times, Father, and we thank you so much that you are committed to dealing with that, to putting it to death, to hacking it to pieces that there will be no Agags in our lives. You are going to take care of the Amalekites. They are going to be exterminated. They are going to be taken out of our lives, not because we can handle them, but because you are going to do so. Thank you, Father, for your faithfulness to us and that you will never let us go. We thank you, Father, in Jesus' name. Amen

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