

1 Samuel 16:4-13: The Character of the King of Kings - Part 2

This morning we are continuing to look at the character of God in choosing David to be king. David is really almost a side note in this section. We actually don't even know his name until Vs. 13 because as important as a role as he will play in Israel's history, this is God working among his people.

We saw how God is actively involved in political affairs, how God's sovereignty - far from being robotic - is actually expressed through his emotions, and how he always provides a way of obedience even in the most difficult situations.

We will see several more characteristics of God this morning as well. By the way, I think we need to remember that understanding the character of God is not unimportant. It's not like there are these 3 different categories in the Bible: who God is, what God does, and what I should be doing to please God.

I'm taking a systematic theology class for seminary and part of completing the class is participating in online discussions. And there's one guy in the class who is really struggling with a particular attribute of God's justice because he says it just doesn't feel like the heart of God. And what he's doing is basically overlooking some passages in favor of other passages and he does that because he says "well, God can't be like that so I can't believe it." The question we should all be asking what does the Bible say about God's justice?

It doesn't really matter what our conception of justice or fairness is or what we think the heart of God is. The question we always need to ask is what does **the Bible** say about God? That's where God has revealed who he is to us.

And who he is is intimately related to what we do or how we praise God.

Heb. 13:5 says to keep your life free from the love of money and be content with what you have. Why? What motivation do we have for that? The rest of the verse says that God will never leave us nor forsake us. We don't need to covet other peoples' stuff because we have an omnipresent God who has made us his own and will be with us always. Who God is has a direct relation to how we live.

Matt 6:25-34 says we don't need to be anxious. Why? Because of God. God is sovereign. He feeds little birds, he clothes every flower of the field. If God takes care of those things, he'll take care of us. Anxiety can be crushed by understanding that God is sovereign and God cares.

So who God is is of incredible importance for how we live. So as we look at God's character this morning, this is not unrelated to us or how we live. Knowing our God is the foundation for how we live.

1) God is a God who tests his people.

Whether you are a new Christian or have followed Jesus for decades, know for sure God is going to test you. He's going to make you do things and go through trials and face challenges that you can't imagine. And some people will tell you, "Yeah, but one day he'll explain everything to you and why all that happened!" To which I would respond: We don't see that anywhere in Scripture. We don't see anywhere in Scripture where God gives an account to us for why he had us go through the situations we went through.

We never get the idea that God explained to Job all that happened to him. Even now, we know what Job went through, but we don't know why.

Here, Samuel goes through something of a trial. The king he was thinking would lead Israel has been rejected. He's dejected. And God tells him to get up and pack some oil and go anoint the next king. But if you step back, this is kind of an odd section.

Why does God have Samuel go through all this rigamarole? Samuel could die - that's a real threat. But why not have Jesse and David sovereignly show up on Samuel's porch like he did with Saul? Why have Samuel go through the guessing game with all of Jesse's kids? I think God is testing Samuel. Is Samuel really going to

trust God's leading with the king? Who really cares more about Israel: God or Samuel? God, of course. But Samuel probably needs to understand that.

And so God puts Samuel through this trial at the end of his life. Just when Samuel's applying for his social security benefits and signing up for AARP and getting ready to kick up his feet at the end of life, God says I'm going to put you to the test.

It's the same reason, many times God takes us through trials. Are trials for God's benefit? He doesn't need to know whether or not we'll be faithful. He doesn't need to know whether or not our faith is genuine. He knows all those things. Who needs to know? We do.

1 Pet. 1:6-8: In this you rejoice, though now for a little while if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith - more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire - may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Sometimes God puts us through hard trials - Peter says grievous - so that we know our faith is genuine. In the parable of the 4 soils do you remember why the second soil - the rocky soil - withered up and died? Trials. God gracious gives us trials to remind us that we are his. Some people fail the trial. They walk away, they've had enough, they are only willing to follow God on their terms. A trial comes along, maybe they don't deny Jesus outright but they're just kind of all done dealing with other Christians or obeying God thoroughly

James 1:2-4 says that we go through trials of various kinds ultimately so that we will be complete, perfect, lacking in nothing. God uses trials to mature us and sanctify us. We don't often grow more mature in the easy times of life. Trials speed up our Christian maturity.

By the way, the issue of God choosing or rejecting here is not about salvation. The concepts might be similar but really the issue here is about roles within the kingdom of Israel. These brothers serve in the army of Israel - we'll see that in the next chapter with the battle where Goliath is killed. And Eliab will be used later on in life as the head of the tribe of Judah (**1 Chron. 27:18**). Almost like a governor or mayor. So this is not as though the Lord has rejected them altogether; he has just rejected them for this position. Interestingly enough, that too would have been a trial in Jesse's household - to see the youngest child anointed over against all of his older brothers.

2) God is primarily concerned about our heart. Read 6-7

This is probably the statement we remember most from this section. That Samuel seems to be primarily concerned about the outward appearance of the young men while God is concerned about the heart. And I want to take a little detour here to talk about the heart because I think it's important.

What do we know about the heart? What is the heart? The heart the center of what you desire and how you operate. And as it relates to this passage, what can we learn about the heart?

A) We have to be careful judging someone's heart.

To start, what do we know about David's brothers? Actually we know nothing about them. For all we know, they were godly young men who you would be happy to have your daughter marry. Even when God says, "Hey, I've rejected this guy, stop looking on the outside" who is he really rebuking? He's really rebuking Samuel. He's rebuking Samuel's judgment based on looks. All we know about the other boys is that they're not chosen.

The problem is that all of us, like Samuel, are inclined to judge people based solely on their looks - either how they dress, or how attractive they are, or maybe how unattractive they are, where they live, what kind of furniture they have, what car they drive.

We can also judge them spiritually based on those things. Well, so and so is always at church. Well, coming to church is good, but maybe so and so is the most legalistic person at church and while they are here every Sunday, they don't actually love anyone and instead cause division. Maybe they read their Bible every day but not to be more like Jesus, but to win arguments against other people. Unless we actually know the person personally and talk with the person it's impossible to know their heart.

I remember one time many years ago I was at church sitting in front of these 2 high school kids who were rather stinky. It wasn't anyone here, I don't think anyone here knows them. But they were very fragrant. And I didn't say it, but I'm thinking, "Fellas, you guys really need to hit the shower." So I get up to preach, get back down and start talking to them once service is over. And thank them for coming they said, "Yeah, sorry we were late, but our parents couldn't give us a ride so we had to ride our bikes across town to get here." It happened to be June, and I did the math, it wasn't across town, it was like 10 miles. How many of us would bike even 2 miles to get to church in the middle of summer? So here I am, Judgy McJudgerson wondering why these kids hadn't taken a shower in a week and they probably took one that morning just before biking half a marathon to come to church. Who was more godly in that situation?

We can know almost nothing about a person's heart unless we talk to them and get to know them. Yet we are so inclined to judge people from the outside that we need constant reminders not to do so.

B) We can't even know our own heart for sure.

I don't think Samuel showed up at Jesse's house thinking "I'm going to judge this guy's whole family based on completely superficial reasons." I think he showed up assuming he was doing the Lord's work. I mean, Saul was an impressive looking guy and the Lord chose him to lead Israel. Eliab was likely an impressive looking young man, the oldest of his siblings. It also seems like from the Lord's rebuke he was tall and muscular. But that wasn't who the Lord had chosen. He could have chosen him to be king if he had wanted to, but he didn't.

But what God reveals is that Samuel didn't even understand his own heart. How many times have we done something sinful claiming that it was a good thing only to realize later on that, yeah, we were really in sin? It happens often. We don't even always know our own heart.

C) Our hearts are thoroughly sinful.

On our best days we are actually aware of the sin we are struggling with. There's a place in the book of Romans where Paul is talking about the struggle a person has with sin.

He says: I do not do the good that I want, but the evil I do not want to do, that's what I keep doing. (**Rom. 7:19**)

That is the struggle of believers. We want to follow God in righteousness and holiness but it seems like we keep doing all the things we don't want to do. There's a struggle - and we're aware of it.

Jesus alludes to this reality when he says: If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself - his own sinful desires, his own sinful will - and take up his cross daily and follow me (**Luke 9:23**).

You know what you do when you pick up your cross? It's a metaphor for carrying your own instrument of death. And Jesus isn't saying your cross is some difficult situation you have to endure. Your cross isn't your unloving spouse, or rude boss, or your medical condition that you have to put up with for who knows how long. No, what you do with the cross is kill the sin that's in you. "What do you have planned for the day?" "I'm going to go nail myself to a cross." Those are us in our sin on our best days.

On our worst days sin is so sneaky and deceptive we don't know even know we're in sin. In fact, on our worst days we're in full blown sin and we try to pawn it off as doing the right thing, we pawn it off as righteousness.

Jer. 17:9: The heart is deceitful above all things. You know what that means? The first and foremost thing we can know about our hearts is that they lie to us. If there's one characteristic about our hearts that stands out it's that they are deceitful. "If I just follow my heart God will lead me in the right way." No! Your heart lies to you constantly.

Some people will say, "I'm redeemed. God has taken out my heart of stone and given me a heart of flesh. I'm a new creation in Christ, my heart is good." Those things are true but why do we still sin and justify it? Because although we have been set free from sin, it's no longer our master - our sin nature is not completely banished from us.

Eph 4:22-23: Paul says to put off the old self - the old sinful self - and be renewed in our minds.

It's not that our heart is always lying to us. Even people who are liars don't lie all the time. But we have to be on guard of our heart. We have to evaluate our desires in light of the word of God.

I once went to a Ripley's Believe It Or Not which is kind of like circus freak show thing. And there were a lot of weird things there, but the one thing I remember was a long tunnel that you had to walk through to get to the end. It was called the revolving vertigo tunnel. The path was straight and level. But once you were in the tunnel the walls moved and spun and rotated so that by the time you got through the tunnel, even though the path was straight, you were hanging on to the hand rails for dear life because your eyes had convinced the rest of your body that the ground wasn't level. The funny part is right before you get in the tunnel you see all these people down at the end walking on flat ground holding on for dear life and by the time you're down there you're doing the same thing.

That's how our hearts are. There are times when we know what truth is, we know what obedience is, and then our hearts take us down the a vertigo tunnel of sin and manipulation and by the end of it we don't know which way is up.

How do we figure out which way is up? The Word of God. And the people of God who come alongside us and gently help us along the way.

D) We can know another person's heart.

A lot of times when we're talking about motives and heart stuff people will be quick to say, "Don't judge me, you don't know me, you don't know where I've been." And can we be honest? Usually that's true. But - and this is big - it doesn't mean we can never know their heart.

Look over at **Matt. 12:33-37** for a minute. We used to have a fruit tree in our yard. And this fall I took a chain saw to it. It wasn't producing the kind of fruit I wanted. I kept going out there wanting oranges, but it kept putting out these nasty pears. Year after year I'd wait for the oranges and year after year it kept putting out pears. I got tired of that game so I cut it down and burned it up.

Why is that silly? Because it wasn't an orange tree. How would one deduce that? Because it never produced oranges. What kind of tree was it? A pear tree. How do we know that? The fruit.

Jesus says there are two kinds of trees in the world. Good trees - righteous trees that represent true believers. And there are bad trees - pear trees - that represent unbelievers. How do you know which is which? By their fruit. **Read 33-37**

How does Jesus say to examine their fruit? By their words. Six times he mentions what comes out of our mouth: speak, speak, speak, words, words, words.

You hang around someone long enough, and let them talk long enough they will show you all that's in their heart. Even the small careless stuff will be on the table on the day of judgment.

Look over at **Matt. 15:15-20**. Let's take it one step further. What does the mouth tell us about the heart.

This is where Jesus is destroying the Pharisees who make people do little ritualistic washing ceremonies to be clean before they eat. Jesus, you hypocrites, it's not what goes into your mouth that defiles you and so doing a cute little washing ceremony won't help you. It's what comes out of your mouth that defiles you. **Read 15-20**

You can tell all kinds of stuff about a person's heart based on what they say. Maybe I don't know you at first, but listen long enough and the heart will come out. And actually what Jesus is saying is that it has to come out. It can't not come out. My pear tree couldn't help but bring forth pears. And orange trees can't help but bring forth oranges. That's what they do. And maybe for a time, while the fruit is ripening and growing we're not sure if it's an orange or a pear, but eventually it will be made known through actions and words.

There is this amazing connection all throughout scripture between the heart and the mouth.

Ecc. 5:2: Be not rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be hasty to utter a word before God. He uses heart and mouth interchangeably.

Psalms 19:14: Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord my rock and my redeemer.

Jas 1:26: If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless.

Our mouths are like the 65" 4K ultra high definition television that plays exactly one channel all the time: Heart TV.

And there are probably some of you going: "Well, I'm never talking to him again. He's just going to judge me." Can I tell you something? It's not me you have to worry about. And it's not the person you're sitting next to you have to worry about. Or people that go to church or the world. Who is it we have to worry about? God.

Back in **1 Samuel 16**, who is it that is looking on our heart that really matters? God. God looks on the heart.

While we don't know other peoples' hearts very easily and our own heart is often deceptive. We know God looks on our hearts. That should cause sort of 2 reactions at the same time. One is fear. God sees into our hearts and knows every single thing about us. And he will bless us and use us according to what he sees.

Matt. 5:8: Blessed - happy - are the pure in heart for they shall see God.

But we also know that for believers God sees all of our heart and still loves us. R.C. Sproul once said: The greatest comfort we have is that God knows absolutely everything about me and still loves me.

How is your heart? What's in your heart? Remember that God sees.

So God tests his people, he is primarily concerned about the heart.

3) God is not unconcerned about appearance. Read 11-12

Now, this is an unusual statement given that just a few verses ago God rebuked Samuel for assuming the king would be Eliab based on his appearance. Men look on the outside, God looks on the inside.

Then God, in his own holy Word, preserves three descriptions of David that all have to do with his appearance. In fact, we don't even know at this point what it is about David's heart that God likes. But we know what he looks like. How is that much different than Saul who was praised for his appearance? Well, it's not as though God doesn't care about appearances.

Most of our translations say that David is ruddy. Ruddy means having a healthy red color. It's actually the same word that was used for Esau (**Gen. 25:25**). Here, though it probably means that he was what we would call tan or bronze colored skin. When you're outside a lot your skin darkens, that seems to be the idea. That even though he's outside a lot tending sheep, he looks really healthy.

He also has beautiful eyes. That's kind of weird. Why do we want to know what David's eyes look like? We're not 100% sure but there's a good chance that this is a figure of speech meaning that David had a happy appearance. You can tell a lot about someone's attitude based on their eyes. There are writings we have outside the Bible where this phrase is used to describe a king who is happy and that's probably the case here. Saul was constantly paranoid, David is often rejoicing. So David is healthy and happy young man.

He is also said to be handsome. David was a good looking young man. He's healthy, happy, handsome. Maybe he's no Saul on the cover of GQ magazine, but he's an alright looking guy in his own right.

I think this is super important for us to understand because we live in an age of Photoshop editing where everything and everyone looks beautiful and perfect and happy. And it's all nonsense and fake and ridiculous. But just because we're not perfect doesn't mean God doesn't care about appearance and attitude and health.

Certainly being slovenly or unkempt isn't a benefit to the kingdom. Spouses should at least try to dress in a way that's pleasing to one another. Kids and retired folks don't always have to wear pajamas. There's balance in our lives. We can go from one extreme to another. But I think at the very least we can say God is not unconcerned about our appearance, even if it's not the most important thing.

4) God will always use his Spirit to accomplish his purposes. Read 13

The work of the Holy Spirit was just as important in the OT as it is in the NT. When God wants to accomplish something among his people he does it through his Spirit.

Human plans and achievement and success mean nothing if they are not accompanied by God's Spirit.

Zech. 7:6: Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hostes.

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God is going to accomplish amazing things through David. But it's not because David is so great. It's because God's Spirit is in David working for God's glory.

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The amazing thing about the NC is that it's not just the king who has the Holy Spirit. Everyone who is a believer in Jesus has the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit has given us all these different gifts and roles within the Church. He gave them to us according to his own sovereign will. Whatever gift you have or don't have is up to the Spirit. And whatever he has given you has been done so to bring glory to God.

From the day God saved you, you were anointed with the Holy Spirit just like David. And maybe your life isn't as prominent as David's but it's no less a testimony to the grace of God working in you. God will always bring himself glory and accomplish his purposes with his people through his Spirit for his glory. **Pray**