

Place: Lurgan Baptist 20:10:2002

Reading: 1 Samuel 1-13

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF DAVID

2. A NOBODY, NOBODY NOTICED

The year 1809 was a very good year. Of course no one knew it at the time because every eye was on Napoleon, as he swept across Austria like a frenzied flame in a parched wheat field. Little seemed significant, the Dictator of France was the talk of all Europe. That same year while war was being waged and history was being made babies were being born in England and America. But who cared about babies and bottles, and cribs and cradles when Austria was falling ? Someone should have. For in 1809 a great host of thinkers and statesmen drew their first breaths. William Gladstone was born in Liverpool. Alfred Tennyson began his life in Lincolnshire and in Hodgenville, Kentucky in a rugged log cabin owned by an illiterate labourer, and his wife were heard the screams of their new-born son, Abraham Lincoln. All this and more happened in 1809.

But nobody noticed. The destiny of the world was being shaped by Napoleon over in Austria. Or was it ? The

"nobodies," noticed were in fact the genesis of a new era. It was their lives, brains, writings that would dent the destiny of the entire world. The year 1020 BC was also a very good year. But not because of Saul, the Napoleon of that day. Saul, Israel's elected king had begun to crack under the weight of his role. Rashness, compromise, and flagrant disobedience to God were the traits in Saul's life. Until finally, Samuel confronted him informing him that God had rejected him as Israel's king. (15:23,26) That year, was special because while everyone was watching Saul's reign sink, in a secluded field in Bethlehem God was raising up a youth named David, a nobody nobody noticed, someone who would change Israel's course forever. "The Lord hath sought him out a man after his own heart." (13:14) God had sought out a man, only a man, but what a man he was.

Would it surprise you to learn that more has been written about David than any other biblical character ?

Abraham has some fourteen chapters dedicated to his life, and so does Joseph, Jacob has eleven. Elijah has ten. But do you have any idea how many are dedicated to David ? Sixty six ! Much is said about David in the Scriptures coupled with the fact that on two occasions he is specifically called "a man after God's one heart."

Was he some sort of superhero ? Some sort of super phenomenal person ? No ! But he was a man who had a heart for God, someone whose heart was God's completely. Now if you look at this passage we read this you'll notice there are three actors in this story, Samuel, Jesse, and David. But above all the hand of God is seen, guiding, directing, overruling. Notice for e.g.;

(1) THE MISTAKE THAT GOD CORRECTS

You see, man's choice is not God's. In these opening verses we see Samuel dejected, fearful.

In (15:6) he looks at things from a worldly perspective, in (15:11) there is forgetfulness ! Put another way I want you to notice that:

(a) MAN PANICS BUT GOD PROVIDES:

You see, all eyes had been on Saul. Now suddenly he was stripped of his authority and kingship. God had rejected him as Israel's king. (15:28) But what does Samuel do ? He panics. He is not only grieved about Saul he is frightened of him as well. (15:1-2) Strange is it not that this normally courageous man became suddenly afraid when he thought of the possible reaction of Saul when he heard the news of David's anointing ?

Is this not one of the sad things about depression ? Some of our best qualities leave us. The fearless man becomes the fearful man. (15:14) But did you notice how gently and graciously the Lord deals with

Samuel ? Look at (15:1-2) Incidentally, there are two things that are said that the Lord provides for Himself.

Two things in which man can have no part. The Lord provides for Himself a Lamb. Do you recall Abraham's words ? " My son God will provide Himself a lamb."

(Gen 22:8) And now (16:1) " I have provided Me a king." The Lamb is for Redemption, the King is for Rule, and its just as impossible for man to provide the King as it is for him to provide the Lamb. But here man panics but God provides. My do you have a Saul in your life ? Someone who intimidates you ? Frightens you ? Like Samuel are you panicking ? Unsure of what tomorrow holds ? Uncertain about the end of the week ?

Are you wondering where your business is leading

you ? Whether or not to make a career change ? The comforting thing is God knows and if we acknowledge Him He will direct our paths. For while we panic, God is already working behind the scenes.

" God holds the key of all unknown

And I am glad

If other hands should hold the key

Of if He trusted it to me

I might be sad."

(b) MAN LOOKS BUT GOD SEES:

Seven of Jesse's sons pass before Samuel (16:10) and seven stands for perfection, in this case the perfection of the flesh. Humanly speaking, you could not ask for anything better, but the best of the flesh is only flesh at the best and to be rejected. Do you see Model Number 1: Eliab: his name means " God is my Father." I picture him as the centre half of the Bethlehem Football Team.

Samuel looks at him and says, " Boy, that reminds me of Saul. He's got to be the one, the choice of God to be next King." God says, " No, Eliab is not the one." Its not his Height, but his Heart that counts. Do you see Model Number 2: Abinadab: " Willing giver." But he was refused. Do you see Model number 3: Shammah: Children, have you seen such unusual names ? How would like if your parents had named you

Shammah ? His name means " Desolation." But he was

refused. You see, God's choice is contrary to human reason. When God would build a man of God he would look for different timber.

Paul says, " Look around Corinthians. You won't find many impressive people here." Why ? So that no one can boast before God. My when we look for people to admire, when we choose our role models, our heroes, we are often swayed or impressed by things that are cause for boasting. We want the beautiful people, the brilliant people, the " successful," people. The superficial impresses us much more than we'd like to admit. But God says, " thats not the way I make choices. I choose the nobodies and turn into somebodies." Do you remember Mary Slessor ? That young girl from Aberdeen who worked among the looms ? She felt that God was calling her to work for Him in Calabar on the west coast of Africa ! But the Foreign Mission of the Church of Scotland were not so sure for they took a long time accepting her. You see, outward appearance, academic qualifications, financial status, neither qualifies nor disqualifies for the service of the Lord. God looks on the heart ! (a) (b)

(c) MAN FORGETS BUT GOD REMEMBERS:

When the seven had passed before Samuel he said,

" Are here all thy children ?" (16:11) Do you see Jesse's, " Oh, yeah, I almost forgot reply." (16:11)

" The youngest he keepeth the sheep." Now this meant more than David being a youth, it meant that David was the least in his father's estimation. In fact, he was so small in his father's eyes that he was not invited to be with the family when Samuel called him to sacrifice. I mean why wasn't David brought in with the others ? Why was he left to his job in the fields when the rest were being considered for promotion ? Because

(c) You see, while the flesh was parading its best the eye of God was on the Forgotten One caring for the sheep. Man had not thought about David but he was God's choice. Samuel says " Send and fetch him for we will not sit down till he come hither." (16:11) Seven have passed by the reviewing stand and now comes number eight and eight is the number of beginning again.

A new beginning comes with David, and bless God when the Son of David came he made all things new. Parenting is not easy sure its not ? I wonder are some of us as parents making the same mistake that Jesse

made ? We are not appreciating each of our children equally ! Do you play favourites ? Do you keep some of the family in the field with the sheep ? Or do you let all your children know, that they have something unique to offer ?
(1)

(2) THE MAN THAT GOD RESPECTS

Its so easy, is it not to make judgements going by outward appearances alone ? Some years ago Jim Kennedy and his wife went to visit Dr. Springer one of the local dentists in the city of Fort Lauderdale. They were out seeking to win souls for Christ. The Doctor was very courteous and invited them in. Jim presented the gospel and then asked, " would you like to receive the gift of salvation ?" " Yes, please," they replied. It was so easy.

Nevertheless, Jim thought, " I shall have to pray with them, I can tell by their expressions that God is not at work here." " Are you sure you understand it

all ? Jim asked. " Yes, thank you." Jim and his wife prayed with them, shook hands and left. When they were in the car Jim said to his wife, " Thats one couple we will never see again." However the next morning, Dr. Springer got out of bed, opened the blinds, daylight streamed into the room. " It was then," he said " I realised I had eternal life." His wife was saved too and they were not only in church the following Sunday but they became mighty soul winners. Yet Jim going by outward appearance alone, had thought, " Nothing is happening here." Is that what you've said during these days of mission ? My God see's the heart ! Thats why he chose David. You see, David was a Found

Man ! God says, " I have found David, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will."

(Acts 13:22) Tell me, has the Lord found you ?

(Ps 89:20) Then David was an Anointed Man ! He was being set apart for his life's ministry. Look at

(16:13 2 Sam 2:4 5:3 Lk 3:21) Think of:

(a) DAVID OUTWARDLY:

Scholars tell us that he was about 15/16 years of age here. On the surface there seemed to be nothing about David that impressed God. Nothing caused Him to say,

" Wow thats my man." David didn't look much different from any of the other Jewish boys of his age. The Bible says in (16:12) So we know he was handsome, had beautiful eyes and a healthy complexion. His outward appearance didn't seem to set apart him in any way. But this was God's man. Josephus tells us that Samuel whispered in his ear the meaning of the anointing. He whispered, " Thou shalt be King." Now when God scans the earth for potential leaders, He is not looking for perfect people since there are none. But He is looking for certain qualities in those people, the same qualities that he found in David. For think of:

(b) DAVID INWARDLY:

1. He was marked by SPIRITUALITY:

" The Lord hath sought Him a man after His own heart." (13:14) What does it mean to be a person after God's own heart ? It seems to me, that you a person whose life is in harmony with the Lord. What is important is completely His." (2 Chron 16:9) My when God's searching eyes stop and fix their gaze on you, does He find a heart fully committed to Him ? A heart grieved by wrong, a heart that longs to please Him. Is that your heart ? 1.

2. He was marked by HUMILITY:

Did you notice what Jesse said ? " He keepeth the sheep." (16:11) The psalmist says, " He (the Lord) chose David and took him from the sheepfolds."

(Ps 78:70) Its as if God says, " I don't care about all that slick public image business. Show me a person who has the character, and I 'll give him all the image he needs. I care about character and servanthood." My had David not a shepherds heart for those who symbolised the people of God ? Later David went from the sheepfold to the palace, but from the attractions and distractions of the court he returned to the sheepfold.

Look at (17:15) David believed the feeding of the fathers sheep took precedence over all ! Is that how we elders feel ? Is caring for the flock our first priority ?

My the nature of ministry is service, for Christ said,

" I am among you as He that serveth." (Lk 22:27) You see, when you have a servants heart you're humble. 1.2.

3. He was marked by INTEGRITY:

The psalmist says concerning David, " He fed Israel according to the integrity of his heart." (Ps 78:72) The Hebrew word translated " integrity," means " complete, whole, innocent, having simplicity of life, wholesome, sound, unimpaired." My integrity is what you are when nobody is looking. You see, you can never fake it with the Lord, He is not impressed with externals. He always focuses on the inward qualities, those things that time and discipline to cultivate. My are you a man or a woman that God could use ? Has the Lord got your heart completely ? Are you marked by integrity ? Its interesting to notice how the Lord trained David for this leadership role. Notice not only (1) (2) but:

(3) THE METHOD THAT GOD SELECTS

Those early years in Bethlehem were in contrast to the years in the splendour of the palace yet God during those years God was carefully training this young man for the throne of Israel. What did God use ?

(a) OBSCURITY:

For David these were essentially hidden years as he,

" kept his father's sheep." (17:34) When you live in the fields tending sheep its solitude that natures you. Think of it, nature was his nurse, companion, teacher. Some years ago when we were out in Israel we stayed at a hotel indeed the only Kibbutz Hotel in Jerusalem, the Mitzpeh Rachel, it was situated on the south side of Jerusalem. You could step out onto the balcony of your room and there before you were the very hills were David tended his sheep wild, gaunt, strong, the very place where David's character was nurtured. For in solitude David became strong through communion with God. " The people that do know their God shall be strong " (Dan 11:32) My have you a place of solitude ? Where you can meet with God, speak to God, wait upon God ? God also used:

(b) MONOTONY:

That's being faithful in the menial, insignificant, routine, regular, unexciting, uneventful tasks of life.

Just dull, plain, life. I heard about a commercial pilot who was flying who was flying for well over 30 years. Here's what he said about flying. He said, " Flying is nothing more than hours and hours of monotony, punctuated by a few seconds of sheer panic." My is that not how God moulds us into the people He wants us to be ? Just constant, unchanging endless hours of monotony as you learn to be a man or woman of God.

(c) REALITY:

For the Lord didn't train to be some sort of irresponsible mystic who sits on top of a hill whistling SS choruses and when he gets a sudden wave of energy teaches the sheep to roll over. No ! David's training exposed him to the danger and threats of reality. He says, " the Lord delivered me out of the paw of the lion and out of the paw of the bear. (17:37) While David was tending sheep God put steel in his bones. Yes, the Lord used Obscurity: Monotony: Reality: to bring David from the place of Humility to the place of Honour. Do you recognise that faithfulness in little things is God's appointed way to bigger things ? (Matt 25:21) Before entrusting David with the nation, what did God do ? He gave him a flock of sheep of protect.

Could it be that the Lord has placed you in some sphere of service for Him which is obscure ? Are you unseen, unknown, unappreciated, unapplauded, and its monotonous ? The question, are you faithful ? For though man may forget you, God will remember and reward you. It began like other day in 1809, in 1020 BC in 2002. Routine, ordinary, unassuming. Just the kind of day God chooses to use David to rule His kingdom. Just the kind of day the Lord will use to work something special in your life. The question is, are you open to Him ?