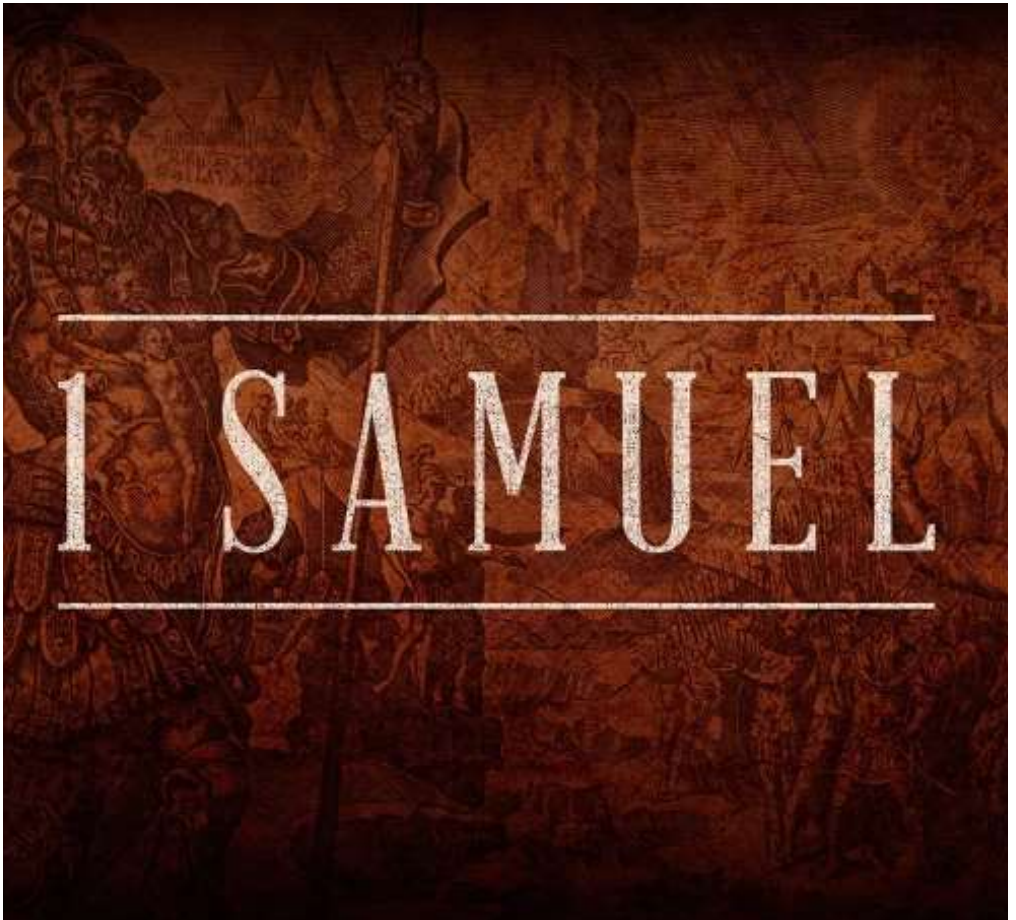


Let's Worship God

10th-15th August 2020

1 Samuel



1 SAMUEL

Monday - 1 Samuel 16 - The LORD's Anointed

Who is the LORD's Anointed? The Hebrew word is 'messiah'. He is God's chosen king. The ruler equipped and empowered to save and bless God's people. He protects them and provides for them, defeating and conquering their enemies. He rules God's people on behalf of God and is submitted to and served by God's people. Who is he?

Why does this question matter? It matters first because he is God's chosen method of relating to mankind. We all relate to God through the anointed-chosen king, either as subjects or rebels. There is no other approach to God. It matters, secondly, because he is God's chosen method of saving mankind. Ignoring his anointed king is like ignoring the life jacket and rafts on a sinking ferry. He is the provided saviour, and there is no way apart from him. It matters, thirdly, because he is God's method of blessing mankind. It's as if God said, "I'm going to give all my blessings to him, for him to hand out." In a world of famine he is the aid lorry with the grain - there is no other way to live. In this chapter God reveals his anointed king to us - verse 3.

We know it is not Saul. Though handsome, well bred, and wealthy, the very image of the king they asked for, he was not the king they needed. Instead of relating them to God he'd rejected God. Instead of saving them from their enemies he's spared their enemies (like Agag in 15:9). Rather than bless them, he'd led them to sin. Saul was chosen by the people, but not by God. He was rejected by God. So who will God choose? All Israel is on tenterhooks after Saul's public rejection (15:28). Chapter 16 is the big reveal: here is the LORD's anointed.

Questions

1. Why would Israel care about the identity of the LORD's anointed?
2. Do you care about who the LORD's anointed is?

Prayer Points

1. Ask God to reveal the LORD's anointed to you this week as we dwell on 1 Samuel 16.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

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." 1 Samuel 16:7

Praise: Psalm 18:38-41 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Tuesday - 1 Samuel 16:1-13 - A Surprising Choice (The Shadow)

These events are fraught with tension - it is edge-of-the-seat stuff. Samuel sets out with his flask of oil - he is tense and frightened (v2). Bethlehem's elders are white as ghosts (v4) - maybe they think he's here as judge to right some injustice. Why then has he the flask of oil, the tool of a king maker? One by one Jesse's son's are presented. Seven times Samuel reaches for the horn, and seven times he nods the son on. Imagine the long awkward wait for David to be brought in from the field. Tense!

Part of what is going on is that Samuel creates a pretext for appearing in Bethlehem so as to avoid suspicion. Imagine Saul had heard that the king maker had turned up with his flask in Bethlehem! Sedition and suspicion are in the air. So Samuel has to drag his own heifer 10 miles to Bethlehem and go through the fuss of ritual cleansing and preparation. At the feast, Jesse's first born, Eliab, is presented before him. He is handsome, strong and tall. Every inch the king - "surely here is the LORD's anointed" (v6). But no! And neither Abinadab, nor Shammah, nor any of the seven sons. So... anyone else then?

David, the smallest and youngest, not important enough to be at the feast, is brought. Here, to Samuel's surprise, and no doubt everyone else at the feast too, is the LORD's anointed (v12)!

Why is he a surprising choice? Read verse 7 and let it sink in. Eliab looked every inch the king, even to Samuel. So did Saul, and that was the problem. Man had looked on the outward appearance. But God looks on the heart, and so his choice is surprising to us - he sees what we do not see. He is more concerned with who we are than what we are. He is more concerned with our attitude than our ability. He is more concerned about our character than our charisma. He is looking for obedience, not magnificence.

Questions

1. Are there any parts of your life that you are uncomfortable with God seeing?
2. How does verse 7 help us relate to our elders and ministers?

Prayer Points

1. Ask God for a spirit that values heart-realities, not externals.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

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." 1 Samuel 16:7

Praise: Psalm 139:1-4 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Wednesday - 1 Samuel 15:1-13 - A Surprising Choice (The Reality)

I'm sure that on reading Monday's devotion you realised this chapter isn't actually about David. It is in one sense, but ultimately he functions as a shadow anointed-messiah king of the real anointed-Messiah king, Jesus. Who is the LORD's anointed - it is Jesus.

He is a surprising choice. There was nothing in his human appearance to attract anyone to him (Isaiah 53:2). You probably wouldn't have looked twice if you passed him in the street. He was from nowhere Nazareth. His own family thought he was just one of them (Mark 3:31-32). Most surprising of all was his suffering - how could the Messiah-king suffer? Inconceivable, to the Jewish mind.

He's even more surprising now. We can't see him and he seems to be silent. He seems to be irrelevant, and the world sees nothing to entice them to believe. If we look at his body, the church, it doesn't seem like much. It is divided in many places, hypocritical in lots of places, weak in most places and going nowhere fast.

Or so it appears. For the Messiah is not to be judged on outward appearance, he has been chosen by God for his heart: pure and obedient. He is the only one actually able to save your soul from death and give you a life of unspeakable happiness forever. Neither is his church to be judged on outward appearances. Size doesn't matter. The number of programmes for you to take part in doesn't matter. Money doesn't matter. God doesn't evaluate a church by these criteria. He looks at the heart of his people and their leaders. No-one would have chosen David to be king, but God chose to pour out his Spirit on him. No-one might choose your church on paper, but God has chosen to pour out his Spirit there.

Questions

1. Do you need to reconsider Jesus and evaluate him differently?
2. Do you need to reconsider your church and evaluate it differently?

Prayer Points

1. Pray to be set free from our culture's obsession with evaluating by appearance and externals.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

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." 1 Samuel 16:7

Praise: Psalm 78A:26-27 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Thursday - 1 Samuel 16:13-23 - A Suitable Choice (The Shadow)

The last section showed David to be a surprising choice as king. A surprising choice is not necessarily a good choice, but God quickly shows us the suitability of his choice.

The Holy Spirit leaves Saul and is replaced by an evil spirit. This is sad and troubling, and shows us that Saul's rejection of God and his rejection by God leads to trouble. That should be no surprise. Saul is 'tormented', or better, 'terrified' or 'terrorised', and his courtiers resort to the usual treatment for such an affliction in the Ancient Near East - music therapy. One of his men happens to know about David, and so the rejected king and the chosen king entwine and entangle. Thus, the rest of the story is set up, but more than that, we see David's suitability for the kingship. In verse 18 we are told that he is a man who plays well, conducts himself well, fights well, speaks well, and looks well. Here his character is revealed, the heart that God saw, the nature that is "better than" Saul's (15:28). The bottom line is this: "the LORD is with him" (verse 18). This explains why he is suitable and why he is equipped to be the anointed king. He will be able to reveal God, save, bless, protect, and provide for his people because the LORD is with him. And verse 23 gives us a foretaste of the blessings he brings: Saul is blessed and the evil spirit driven away. The LORD is with him to free people from the power of evil.

How is the LORD with him, and how does this make him suitable? David's anointing in verse 13 wasn't just symbolic; it was joined to the reality - he was anointed by the Holy Spirit. God's king is a Spirit-filled battler of evil. When looking for a leader this should be our number one priority.

Questions

1. How do you know if someone is filled with the Spirit or not?

Prayer Points

1. Pray for Spirit-filled leaders in our world and our church.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

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." 1 Samuel 16:7

Praise: Psalm 51A:4-5 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Friday - 1 Samuel 16:13-23 - A Suitable Choice (The Reality)

It's not hard to look past the shadow (David) and see the reality (Jesus) of God's chosen king who is even more suitable for the task.

Like David, his suitability is not in his looks, nor apparent on the surface. But he was and is the one pre-eminently empowered by the Holy Spirit. He is anointed by the Spirit at his baptism, and all he does from then on is in the power of the Holy Spirit. If you have time, read Luke 4:1-21 just to get a flavour of this. The LORD is with him to make him able to reveal God, save, bless, protect, and provide for his people. He is better than we, as David was better than Saul; we all have rejected God's Word like Saul; he has obeyed it all, for us. The description of verse 18 fits him. He is a man of valour, walking into the baited traps of Satan (Luke 4:1-13). He is a man of war who has defeated his enemy at the Cross. He is prudent in speech; his Word is wise, sound, and good. He is a man of good presence, who brings life and joy - his company is good. And like David in verse 23, he undoes the influence of evil. He literally drove evil spirits away, not even needing a harp, just his Word. He gives peace in the soul and conscience, and over time heals the wounds of sin and evil. Don't judge our Saviour by his cover - he is whole package, God's chosen, equipped, empowered Saviour-King.

We like to think we know exactly what we need, but God knows perfectly what we need, and has supplied it in Jesus. Have you experienced him in these ways? Are there dark influences in your life that you need freed from? He is the one who can do this. Are you looking for someone who will be good company and never fail you? Jesus is the "man of good presence" (verse 18) who will bring God to your life, for "the LORD is with him."

Questions

1. List the ways in which Jesus is a suitable saviour, in the ways that David is described in verse 18.

Prayer Points

1. Pray for our Spirit-filled King to overcome the power and influence of evil in your life.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

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." 1 Samuel 16:7

Praise: Psalm 78A:26-27 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Saturday - 1 Samuel 16 - God's Playbook

As we step back from this chapter this week I want us to see the big picture: God's way of working in the world, or his playbook.

Remember Hannah's prayer in chapter 2, the theme music for 1 Samuel: "The LORD makes poor and makes rich; he brings low and he exalts. He raises up the poor from the dust; he lifts the needy from the ash heap to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honour. For the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S, and on them he has set the world" (2:7-8). Here he is bringing low and exalting, raising the poor to places of honour. Here he is reversing human expectations with his choice of a surprising, yet suitable king. Saul seems like an ideal king; he is not. David seems like a mere shepherd; he is not. God reverses human expectations. He does it ultimately with Jesus, who seemed defeated but instead was defeating. He does it now in his church, which seems weak, but when it is weak then it is strong.

Too often we judge churches and ourselves by appearance. We judge churches by their size, their programmes, their pastor, and their number of young families. We judge ourselves by what we have achieved, our gifts and our contributions. But God is not looking for might, size, and strength; he's looking for obedience. "For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God" (1 Corinthians 1:26-29).

Our Saviour proves this. He was weak in human terms; we'll be weak. He was tempted; we'll be tempted. He was outwardly unsuccessful; we'll be outwardly unsuccessful. But he was obedient - that's our path.

Questions

1. Where do you need to re-evaluate your judgements according to God's criteria?

Prayer Points

1. Ask that you may have a heart that values the things that God values.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

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." 1 Samuel 16:7

Praise: Psalm 40 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

The goal of Let's Worship God is to encourage and help you in your worship of God each day.

**God tells us that
Ezra read from
the book of the Law
day after day
and that
the people of God
were filled with joy!**

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