

**YOUNG DAVID**  
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Today we are talking about **Young David** in the Old Testament – one day to become King David.

David started out as a shepherd boy. He was the youngest of eight sons of a man called Jesse – “**Jesse of Bethlehem**” to be specific – the place of Jesus’ birth – significant at this Christmas time. God’s writing his story and links it altogether in Jesus Christ.

Scripture talks about Jesus as “the root and offspring of David and the bright and morning star.”

Matt talked last time about the human King that Israel had demanded to have ( even though God said I am a better King than any human king who will ever reign over you– God finally gave into their request and gave them a human King - King Saul)

Turns out, just as God predicted, Saul messes up terribly, and does all kinds of things that anger God

So God tells Samuel the prophet, *while Saul is still on the throne mind you (very dangerous mission God asks Samuel to act on)*

Go and anoint another king – a better king who will follow in my ways and do a better job than Saul...

God says, “**Samuel...I am sending you to Jesse Of Bethlehem**”

He has sons, and one of those sons you will anoint as the next King of Israel

So this is a secret dangerous mission (**Play mission impossible music maybe?**)....because if Saul finds out that Samuel is anointing David King without his knowledge Samuel would be executed

So God says “Take a heifer and just tell the elders that you are coming to sacrifice”

Now this isn’t really a lie because after kings were anointed you often did do a sacrifice of a heiffer

So Samuel the prophet goes to Jesse’s house in Bethlehem using the heifer as his excuse.

**(Mission impossible music and a picture of his trek on a map? Or an image of Bethlehem?)**

Now Jesse had 7 sons standing there just waiting for him...

And when Samuel walks in the house and sees, Eliab the oldest son of Jesse, Samuel is certain that this is the one to be anointed king.

Maybe Eliab looked, like this...or like this...or lack that

**(Picture of some male models or body builders flexing?)**

Anyway, we don’t know exactly what Eliab looked like but scripture says

Eliab is *tall strapping and handsome* – looks the kingly part.

Now this harkens back to when Saul had been anointed king.

Saul was tall, strapping and handsome as well

So the author is sort of making that comparison now that Saul is not doing so great as King; making the point that the outward appearance has meant nothing in terms of Saul’s success.

So of course, Samuel is dead wrong about Eliab being then next king. God tells Samuel, ***“Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”***

That is a well-known often quoted verse.

I always thought it was somewhere in the NT, but it isn't

The statement that *God looks on the heart* – it comes from when Samuel is with Jesse secretly choosing the next king – who is to be David.

It's an Old Testament verse – not a NT one – God looked at the heart then...and he still looks at our hearts now.

Never has God ever measured people the way the world measures them- by the outside appearance

Always measures from the inside

With God, it always seems to be the one we least suspect, the smallest, the weakest, the one least qualified in our eyes, the one people have a tendency to look down on, that so often ends up being God's chosen.

And If you are taking in, or caring for one of the least of these today – someone that the world would cast aside – I just want to remind you today, you are operating out of the heart of God. If you are a teacher caring for special needs kids in a way that makes them able to learn, if you are parenting someone else's child to help them out, if you are helping an elderly parent or friend that the world I want to say....Thank you.

“Whatever you do for the least of these, you do to me.”

Even in terms of the nation God chooses – is it a big huge place?...No. Its tiny little...Israel... the smallest nation. A tiny little people in the midst pagan giant nations

Karl Barth was once asked what he thought the greatest proof for the existent of God was. His response? **Israel**. The fact that such a small nation of people would have survived down through the centuries is an absolute astounding miracle.

God chooses the small, the unlikely ones, the things we would look down upon or snub, or scorn, and he says to those people “you are mine”...I choose you...you are the one.”

I remember doing youth ministry years ago in a church in Newark NJ – the armpit of the state. On this particular day, I was down in the church youth room located in the basement – or the dungeon of this big old historic church - trying to explain the Trinity to a class of fidgety youth, and I am sure I was doing a terrible job.

I should probably have settled on a different topic like dating, but I was so eager to share my esoteric seminary training with them.

They hated it.

Anyway, one of the kids who was a chronic trouble maker, in a fit of frustration (I guess he had been discussing his love life with a neighbor while I had been extrapolating on the “three-in-one” concept ,and the two of them had gotten into a tiff) stood up in the middle of my boring talk and threw a chair across the room.

His name was Randy. “Randy,” I said. “You are so out of here!”

Randy was only too happy to leave and he slammed the door behind him.

Then I had to talk to Randy's parents – again.

Randy was the worst one in the youth group...always causing problems.

Always interrupting, goofing off, throwing things, using bad language.  
About five years later, after I left that church, (thank you Jesus) I met Randy's Dad randomly in a store.

He told me that Randy was in Seminary, and how much the youth group had helped form in him a sense of call to ministry.

I smiled and said I was so glad...but all I could think was...

**Randy? A sense of call to ministry? You have got to be kidding!** Randy was the last one in that group that I ever would have thought would ever go to seminary. And yet...God chose him. *I only hope though he never tries to preach on the Trinity...cause I bet he still doesn't get it.*

So here Samuel is

Sure that God has chosen Eliab to be King

As we said, He is tall, handsome, looks the part

Not only that, he is the oldest son. That was a big deal back then

And God says, "Nope not that one" And Samuel is shocked

So he goes to the next son...

And God says "Nope not that one either"

One by one, all seven of Jesse's sons parade before Samuel and one by one God says "Nope...not him...not him...not him".

David is so out of his father Jesse's mind that day that after all 7 of the sons are rejected, it seems like there may have been a kind of awkward pause

Like maybe Jesse is thinking

So...uh Samuel...uh gee...if none of these sons are right...why did you come here in the first place? Was this a ploy to sell me life insurance or something?

Its like for a moment they are out of options, and there's nothing more to do

So Samuel actually has to ask Jesse...Jesse doesn't offer...***Are you sure these are all the sons you have?***

Kind of funny in a way..isn't it? That Jesse wouldn't remember David, his youngest?

I had an acquaintance once who had 13 children

And I am telling you, she never knew where they all were

They were happy well-adjusted kids but

Once she left one of them at the ball field and didn't notice until way later

And once I asked her how many kids she had and she told me 12, and then said quickly Oh, I mean 13

So I guess Jesse with at 8 sons, and I am sure a bunch of daughters, wasn't really thinking about the last one, the little one, David

Out with the sheep – smelling of sheep

The word that is used in the Hebrew to refer to David in this passage is "**the runt**"

Sort of like the reject of a litter of puppies – the one you don't choose to take home with you, right? Cause they are too small, and weak and they may not make it...

So essentially Jesse says to Samuel, '***Yeah, I've got one more son but he's the runt of the litter. I doubt that you would want him. He isn't kingly material.***'

But Samuel says, "Bring him in – we are not sitting down until he gets in here from the fields"

That might have been a long wait, but Samuel gets now how God is working and that this forgotten son, overlooked by his father, is probably the one God has chosen...

And of course, it is the runt, the small young shepherd boy, that is the chosen one of God to be King.

One translation puts it this way,

**David comes in, ruddy and handsome...with beautiful eyes**

Now remember...God had said already that appearance doesn't matter

And yet this is one of the few places in scripture where a description of how a person looks is given.

It's like the author is saying...it isn't the appearance that matters. God looks at the heart, but at the same time what God chooses is beautiful, and good – almost like in David's case, the outward reflects the inward.

And God says "Yup. That's the one! Anoint him!"

And Samuel anoints David king that day – that little shepherd boy

It is significant the David started out as a shepherd and became a King

Jesus was both our good shepherd and our King – Jesus Christ...the word Christ means "anointed one"

The anointing of David as king is God's party right then.

It's a tiny, clandestine event.

We have no idea how David is going to actually become King at this point.

And afterward that's it. Samuel takes off. It's over.

I mean it might have seemed like a so what kind of thing...how on earth is a little shepherd boy in a small village going to take the throne? You are just kind of left wondering...

But God is writing this story and...

Scripture says, **"...from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came upon David in power."**

**Psalm 78:70-72** says that

That God

**...chose David his servant and took him from the sheep pens; from tending the sheep he brought him to be the shepherd of his people Jacob, of Israel his inheritance. And David shepherded them with integrity of heart; with skillful hands he led them."**

What transpires next is that Saul hears that David can play the harp beautifully, and in his tormented state he asks for David to come into his court and play to him when his mind is tormented with "an evil spirit" as the Scripture describes it.

So David goes, steps into the King's court for the first time, and plays his harp.

**(IMAGE OF FAMOUS REMBRANDT PRINT OF DAVID PLAYING FOR SAUL – I will comment on this briefly)**

Probably much of what he sang to Saul you can find in the book of Psalms in the center of your Bible. Psalm 61 even mentions "the king" and probably David wrote it just for Saul.

The word Psalms is another word for Songs. Psalms is like the hymn book for the Jews.

David's singing on his harp, calms King Saul when his mind became distressed. And this is how David first enters the King's courts. Saul doesn't know that this young lad will one day take his crown. A lot of drama and suspense here as God writes this story.

Saul, goes out of his mind eventually, and

During this period, David makes a best friend in Saul's son Jonathan

The two of them are inseparable and Jonathan saves David's life when Saul in a rage of jealousy one time pursues David to kill him.  
During this period is also when David slays Goliath with his slingshot – a favorite well-known story of courage and triumph.

**Now, I want to ask you...**What was it about David that God saw that he valued so much? When God looked at David's heart, what did he see?

The truth is that David was terribly and tragically human. We see this unfolding in his later life. He did all kinds of things that were awful including committing adultery by killing his mistress' husband...terrible things he did

However he is revered in scripture, and lifted up as Jesus' ancestor  
He is revered by Jews today as the greatest king in all of scripture

**What did God see when he looked at David's heart? Certainly NOT perfection...**

And that's important for all of us to hear today...We are all imperfect, broken people  
David, along with Paul and Jonah and whole cast of characters were tragically flawed  
And yet they stand as pillars of the faith...

Again and again in scripture there is this refrain **"David was a man after God's own heart."**  
What does that mean?

I will tell you

No matter what David went through, no matter how dark it got, no matter what dastardly horrible thing David did that might make our blood boil,...

**David never once doubted God's unfailing love for him. He knew God's nature.**

**He always knew that God's justice was better human justice. He always knew that fellowship with God trumped any kind of human love. And when he offended God, his heart was broken.**

David knew God closely, intimately, personally, as a friend  
When we look at the psalms – they reveal in a beautiful way this relationship David had with God  
...and they reveal his heart...it was all about God

The most famous psalm written by shepherd boy David is psalm 23...one example..

It starts out **"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want."**

Now stop right there

What is David doing here?

He is identifying with God...and saying just like I am a shepherd for my sheep, so the Lord God is a shepherd to me.

Now pause here a minute...all of you in your respective jobs or roles..

Do right now what David does in this psalm

Put God into your job description and say to yourself...

The Lord is my "nurse"...I shall not want

The Lord is my "doctor"...I shall not want

The Lord is my "waiter"...I shall not want

The Lord is my "computer programmer"...or "software engineer"...I shall not want

The Lord is my "teacher or principal"...I shall not want

The Lord is my "tight end, or center fielder"...I shall not want...

The Lord is my music director...I shall not want  
The Lord is my "lawyer/advocate, I shall not want"  
The Lord is my "mother, or father, or grandfather"...I shall not want  
And then think about things in your job that parallel who God is... and how God works in your life  
You could write your own Psalm 23 based upon your job description or your role

Cause that's what David does...look

***He makes me to lie down in green pastures...He leads me beside the still waters....He restores my soul...***...what David did physically as a young shepherd boy he interpreted spiritually, as God doing the same for him  
(*Maybe when you get home you want to do this for your role or job – and we'll post it on the website - fun*)

I bring this up only because I want you to see how close David was to God in those early years of his life,

As he quietly watched his father's sheep, he was thinking about God all the time–

David wrote, **"I meditate on You in the watches of the night."**

**"When I awake, I am still with you."**

David was full of joy and song because of how wonderful he knew God to be

Cause David gets Gods love.

And in his gift of being able to sing and play the harp, he sings about who God is all the time.

Gratitude to God pours out of his heart.

And you will see, as I said, that all of his life, despite his messes, David never let go of who he knew God to be and his deep love for the Lord – even when he became king and blew it so many times – he always threw himself back on God's mercy which he knew was so much stronger and more secure than anything people could offer.

He always came back around to the love and mercy of God for him – again and again.

No matter how many times he blew it. That's what made him great.

In David's psalms we grasp the New Testament God of Jesus Christ in a way we don't see anywhere else in the Old Testament...

The psalms of David are so full of the love and mercy and compassion and forgiveness of God, at a time when most people knew nothing of that kind of a God.

Even Saul, in his troubled state, was calmed as David sang about who God was

Experiencing who God is, his amazing love, heals our hearts and calms our nerves – doesn't it?

Makes us whole again

Here are the words of Thanksgiving and praise from the shepherd/king David who Knew God so well and in so many ways was a foreshadowing Jesus...Let's read them together

**"The Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations." Psalm 100:5**

**"The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in love...as far as the east is from the west so far has he removed our transgressions from us." Psalm 103: 8,12I**

**“Trust in him at all times, you people; pour out your heart to him, for God is our refuge.”  
Psalm 62:8**

**“You Lord are forgiving and good, abounding in love to all who call to you...I will praise you, Lord my God with all my heart; I will glorify your name forever. For great is your love toward me; you have delivered me from the depths.” Psalm 86:5, 12-13**

**“I will praise God’s name in song and glorify him with thanksgiving.” Psalm 69:30**

Do you see how David got who God was? How he grasped hold of God’s love and forgiveness and mercy – even in the OT? Even as a shepherd boy?

I hope this Thanksgiving you can celebrate with singing, just like David.

*A recent study showed that families don’t do three things anymore – they don’t sing together anymore..or laugh very much...or tell stories together.*

I encourage you to do all of that...especially sing something about the goodness of God this Thanksgiving...with

praise in your heart like David ...who declared **“great is your love toward me, for you have delivered me from the depths.”** Because of that praise and gratitude for who God was David was a man after Gods own heart...

Let’s do the same...

*I want to share with you Stacy Tong’s story. Stacy is a physician at Kaiser Santa Clara. Some of you have heard this before but I want you to hear it again. There is a place in this story where Stacy can’t talk anymore. It’s when he gets to the part about his experience of the immeasurable love of God.*

*Remember as you listen that this God is right here today and...nothing can separate you from that love of God that David knew so well, revealed to us in the person and work of Jesus Christ, may you choose for him and get to know him well – that you might be filled with gratitude and thanksgiving this season.*