

**Holy Cross Lutheran Church
Adult Bible Class
May 10, 2020**

After God's Own Heart - David and the Grace of God

Someone once said the most compelling stories include the following – religion, royalty, mystery, and sex. Perhaps that is why the stories of King David in the Old Testament endure to this day as the favourites of many people, even after their days in Sunday School. Those four elements and a whole lot more combine to make the story of David, the shepherd boy who became king, a fascinating tale. But this is more than just a good story. First, its real history, and second, it gives us many insights not just into David and the life of ancient Israel but also gives us a wonderful perspective on the grace of God. In 1 Samuel 13:14 David is described as a *“man after God's own heart.”* In God's working in and through David we are given an insight into the very heart of God. For the next eight Sunday's we will focus on various elements in the story of David, to the grace of God revealed.

Some Background

We are introduced to David in 1 Samuel 16 as Samuel arrives at the house of Jesse, in Bethlehem to anoint one of Jesse's sons as the second king of Israel. To everyone's surprise the son who is chosen and anointed is David, the youngest of Jesse's sons and one who was not even present when Samuel arrived as he had been busy tending sheep. Obviously, Jesse was certain one of his older boys would be selected for the highest office in the land.

However, before we focus on the anointing of David, it will be helpful to have a bit of an understanding of the background into which David is chosen to be king.

1. Israel in the time of the Judges

Before there were kings in Israel there were Judges. Between the death of Joshua and the birth of Samuel there were 12 Judges who are called by God to lead the people back to him after a time of disobedience. The work of six of the judges is described in detail in the book of Judges; some of their names are well known – Gideon, Deborah, and Sampson – others receive only a brief mention – Tola, Ibzan and Abdon.

However effective each Judge was during their lifetime, none had a long-lasting effect on the life of the people. Israel remained as a confederation of tribes without central leadership. The final sentence in the book sums up the situation pretty clearly, “In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (Judges 21:25).

2. Samuel

The man chosen by God to begin to unite the 12 tribes of Israel was Samuel. Unlike the Judges, Samuel commands national respect and functions in many ways to lead the people. He is for example:

- A prophet/preacher (1 Samuel 7:2-4)
- A priest (1 Samuel 7:5)
- A judge (1 Samuel 7:6, 15-17)

It is eventually to Samuel that the leaders of Israel come, requesting a King. (1 Samuel 8:4-22). Even though Samuel is bitterly opposed to the idea of a king, especially as it seems the desire of the people is motivated by jealousy of other nations, the idea of a king has been brewing for some time, and really comes from God, himself.

- Genesis 17:6 “Kings will come from you” spoken by God to Abraham
- In Deuteronomy 17:14-20, Moses lays out the basic framework for the appointing of a king
- In the book of Ruth we are given a behind the scenes glimpse at God’s plan to bring David to the throne.
- When Samuel’s mother, Hannah, rejoices that she will have a child, her prayer ends on a “royal note” -- “he will give strength to his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed” 1 Samuel 2:10

3. **Saul**

The final piece of the background is Saul, the man anointed to be the first king of Israel. In 1 Samuel his rise and demise happen very quickly.

- 1 Samuel 10 – Anointed
- 1 Samuel 11 – Confirmed by the people
- 1 Samuel 13 & 15 – rejected for an unlawful sacrifice and disobedience to the Lord’s commands
- 1 Samuel 16 – loses the Spirit of the Lord

However, Saul reigns for 42 years! 1 Samuel 16 to 1 Samuel 31 is really the excruciating story of the demise of his leadership. If David is to be “the man after the heart of God,” Saul is the man after the heart of the people.

The Anointing of David - 1 Samuel 16:1-13

As noted earlier, no one expected David to be anointed as Israel’s second king; he wasn’t even invited to the ceremony. God is the one at work in choosing his king, David is simply the recipient of the promise.

The actual ceremony is described quite simply. Samuel arrives in Bethlehem and invites Jesse to attend a service of sacrifice. The leaders of the city, Jesse, and seven of Jesse’s sons arrive at the appointed place and one by one the boys are brought before Samuel. However, none of them is chosen. David is called in from tending sheep and he is anointed as king. Over it all hangs this word from God, “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)

The actual anointing is quite simple. Oil is poured in David’s head. Oil was used to consecrate various items to God’s service and to consecrate people. Why oil is used and not some other liquid is never discussed. Certain oils were aromatic and used at times of celebration (much like we use cologne and perfume) and oil was a sign of bounty.

However, behind the simple act is great meaning.

1. Divine Election – the anointing showed the man of God’s choosing. It is only when God says, “Arise, anoint him, for this is he” that Samuel does what he has been sent to do.
2. Divine Endowment – As the anointing was completed, we are told “the spirit of the Lord rushed upon David from that day forward” (1 Samuel 16:13)

So, what does all this mean for us today? A person who was anointed was a “mashiah.” From this Hebrew word we get the word Messiah (Christ) and with that we begin to understand what anointing means for us today.

When Jesus arrived at the Jordan River at the beginning of his ministry, he came to be proclaimed as the Messiah at his Baptism. The same two things that happened when David was anointed happened when Jesus was baptised:

1. God’s “election” of his Son to be King was announced. “This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased” -- Matthew 3:17
2. The Holy Spirit comes and rests on Jesus.

Later in his ministry Jesus will commission the disciples to baptise and teach. Anointings will continue. When people are baptised today the same two things that happened to David are happening. God is announcing his election of you as his child and God is giving you the gift of the Holy Spirit and making you part of this royal priesthood.

“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.” -- 1 Peter 2:9-10

With the anointing of David, Israel will never be the same again. The Holy Spirit comes on David and he is on an irreversible mission to unite God’s people and to be a king after the heart of God himself. God chooses not the tallest, strongest, or eldest of the sons of Jesse to be king. He chooses from the margins a son whose father did not even bother inviting to the anointing. In that the seeds of hope are sown. Samuel departs for Ramah. Like Simeon who saw the baby Jesus, Samuel can go in peace.