



God Chooses David

Called by God

About the Story

We have all heard of the phrase, “Don’t judge a book by its cover.” In today’s lesson, God teaches Samuel that very lesson when Samuel lets appearances distract him from who God has called him to anoint to be the next king of Israel.

Last week, we read the story of God calling Samuel to become a great prophet. In the daily readings this past week, we saw one of Samuel’s greatest acts as a prophet—helping Israel transition from being a tribal nation to having its first king, King Saul. King Saul’s reign started out pretty well—he was anointed by Samuel, had several military victories, and united the twelve tribes of Israel. However, the prosperity of King Saul’s reign would be short lived.

First, King Saul planned an invasion against a rival nation, the Philistines. Samuel announced to King Saul that he would come in a week’s time to perform the necessary sacrifices and offerings to receive God’s blessing before the battle. King Saul grew impatient waiting for Samuel to arrive, so he performed the sacrifices himself. Next, King Saul directly disobeyed God when he failed to follow God’s instructions in a battle against another rival nation, the Amalekites. Samuel told King Saul that God has rejected his reign due to his continued disobedience. King Saul grabbed hold of Samuel’s garment, ripping a piece off, Samuel responded by telling Saul, “The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you this very day,” thus effectively guaranteeing the end of King Saul’s reign (1 Samuel 15:28).

Our first of two passages today takes place soon after this. God tells Samuel that God has chosen a new king from among a man named Jesse’s sons and Samuel must go anoint him. Samuel initially judges the sons based upon their appearance, but God tells Samuel, “Do not look on his

The Point:

God sees beyond the exterior to what is within our hearts. In our fast-paced world, we too often dismiss someone or something based upon a quick, first impression. The prophet Samuel makes that same mistake, only for God to tell him that God judges people based upon their hearts, not their outward appearances. God calls us based upon what is in our hearts, too, seeing past what our society values, and instead sees us for who we truly are, deep down inside.

Anointing

Anointing someone with oil occurs many times throughout the Bible. In our story today, Samuel anoints David with oil, declaring him king of Israel. In Psalm 92, the psalmist speaks of being anointed with oil and called by God. The Hebrew word “messiah” means anointed one. In James, the writer encourages members of the church to anoint one another with oil, particularly as a sign of healing. Anointing someone is a physical sign of God’s blessing on that person.

Last Week/Next Week

Last week, we learned about God calling Samuel to become a great prophet. Today, we learn that God asks Samuel to anoint David, calling him to be king of Israel. Next week, David's son, Solomon, begins the construction of a beautiful temple for God.

appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7). Samuel finds that it is Jesse's youngest son, a shepherd boy named David, that God has chosen to be the next king.

Our second passage for today is found in Psalm 51. The introduction to the psalm tells us that it was written by David after he fell in love with another man's wife, Bathsheba, and had that man killed so he could be with her. God confronts David through the prophet Nathan, and David repents, writing this song. God judged David by his heart when he was first anointed king, and now David, realizing his mistake, asks God to create in him a clean heart.

Opening Prayer

God of our salvation, you look past how the world sees us and even how we see ourselves to look at our hearts. With David, we ask for you to create in us a clean spirit and allow us to share in the joy of your salvation. Help us to share that joy with all the world. We pray all of this through the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Into the Story

Speaking of judging a book by its cover, most books have a short one or two sentence review by a book critic on the cover. For instance, one of the Harry Potter books might be described as "a magnificent epic, full of magic, childhood adventures, and a talking hat!" Come up with a one or two sentence review for a story from the Bible. How would you let a potential reader know what to expect without revealing too much? After you finish coming up with your review, share it with the rest of the group and see if anyone can guess which story you are reviewing.

Learning the Story

Samuel learns to look past appearances when he is called to anoint David to be the next king of Israel, because God looks at the heart. We then read a psalm where the psalmist asks God to create a clean heart within them.

Read 1 Samuel 16:1-5 – Samuel Seeks a New King

- ❓ Israel had high hopes for their first king, but he quickly let them down. Describe a time in your

Bible Connections

- ✝ The psalmist sings of God anointing David (Psalm 89:19-24).
- ✝ Jesus tells his followers to not judge by appearances (John 7:21-24).
- ✝ Paul writes that in this lifetime we can see and know things only in part, but one day, we will know fully (1 Corinthians 13:8-13).

life where you had high hopes for something that did not pan out how you expected it to. How did you feel? What allowed you to move on from the experience?

- ❓ To what city did God send Samuel to find the new king?
- ❓ Why do you think the elders of the city were afraid of Samuel's coming?

Read 1 Samuel 16:6-13 – Samuel Anoints David

- ❓ Describe a time when you judged someone by their outward appearance, only to be surprised when you got to know them?
- ❓ How does the text describe David?
- ❓ What do you think is the significance of Samuel anointing David?

Read Psalm 51:10-14

- ❓ What does the psalmist mean by asking God to create in them a “clean heart”?
- ❓ As stated in the introduction, this psalm is usually connected to the story of David committing adultery with Bathsheba. Does knowing David would commit such a horrible sin change your opinion of him? Do you think Samuel would have anointed David if he knew what David would do?
- ❓ The psalmist describes God as the “God of my salvation.” What does that phrase mean to you?

Living the Story: Service

Each person will go around the room and anoint the person to their right with their permission. To anoint someone, dip your thumb into the oil, then make the sign of the cross on the persons' forehead (or hand), saying the following blessing while you do so: “[Name], you are a child of God. Go with God's blessing, and do the work God has called you to do.” After you anoint the person, you may wipe the excess oil from your finger using the towel. If someone does not want to be anointed with the oil, or if you are unable to procure the supplies needed, you may still make the sign of the cross on their forehead (or hand) and say the prayer without the oil.

Supplies

- Anointing or olive oil
- Small bowl
- Wash cloth or towel

Bible Nuts & Bolts: Biblical Inspiration

There are numerous ways to understand the Bible as inspired by God. For much of the Bible's early history, religious figures in both Jewish and Christian contexts primarily read the Bible believing that there was a surface meaning of the text, but the actual meaning of the text was a deeper meaning that could only be interpreted by those who were inspired by God to do so.

Today, many believe that the Bible was written by humans, but inspired by God. In other words, God inspired humans to write the Bible, but, as humans make mistakes, sometimes this resulted in the Bible having mistakes, which is why it has contradictions, historical errors, and the like. Others believe the Bible to be the literal word of God and therefore is without error or mistake. In this understanding, every word of the Bible is understood to be factually and literally true.

Closing Prayer

Split into two groups, then read together Psalm 51:10-14 responsively, with one group reading the first part of each verse and the other reading the second. Close together with a group “Amen.”

At Home

- ✝ Read all of Psalm 51, from beginning to end. What images, phrases, or words stand out to you? Reflect on what God is speaking to you through the psalm.
- ✝ Throughout the week, whenever you meet someone new, look past their outward appearance and try to see God in them.
- ✝ Psalm 51 references salvation a few times. Draw a picture of what you imagine salvation to be—take this challenge as literally or creatively as you would like!

Daily Readings

Sunday—Read 1 Samuel 16:1-13; Psalm 51:10-14

Samuel anoints David to be the new king of Israel. The psalmist asks God for forgiveness. Reflect on a sin that you struggle with, then, pray using the words of Psalm 51:10-14 and allow yourself to trust in God’s forgiveness.

Monday—Read 2 Samuel 1:1-27

David mourns Saul and Jonathan. Say a prayer for a friend, congregation member, or family member who lost a loved one recently, wishing them healing and hope.

Tuesday—Read 2 Samuel 5:1-5; 6:1-5

David becomes king and makes Jerusalem the religious and political capital of his kingdom. Say a prayer for as many religious and political leaders as you can name.

Wednesday—Read 2 Samuel 7:1-29

God makes a covenant with King David. Write a list of the promises that God has made that mean the most to you. Hang up your list in a noticeable place so you can be reminded of God’s promises on a daily basis.

Thursday—Read 2 Samuel 12:1-24

David messes up, big time. Apologize to someone you have hurt—whether accidentally or intentionally.

Friday—Read 1 Kings 1:28-40

David’s son, Solomon, becomes the third king of Israel. Transitions are always hard—think of someone going through a transition in their life and send them a message of encouragement.

Saturday—Read 1 Kings 3:3-28

King Solomon quickly becomes known as a very wise king. Ask a trusted friend, elder, or parent to share a piece of wisdom they have learned from their life, then return the favor by sharing a piece of wisdom you have learned.