

Context:

- In CH 15, we witnessed King Saul being finally and ultimately rejected by the Lord, for his continual disobedience.
- CH 16 begins a major shift in the book, where the focus of the story moves away from King Saul, to the “man after God’s own heart” (CH 13:14), the man “better” than Saul (CH 15:28), the man whom God has chosen to be king (David).

The Story:

1 Samuel 16:1-3 (ESV)- ¹ The Lord said to Samuel, “How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go. I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.” ² And Samuel said, “How can I go? If Saul hears it, he will kill me.” And the Lord said, “Take a heifer with you and say, ‘I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.’” ³ And invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do. And you shall anoint for me him whom I declare to you.”

“How long will you grieve over Saul?” (v1)

- It is not wrong to grieve (for even the Lord grieves), but there is a time to stop grieving and move on to see what God is doing.
- For Samuel, he was to stop grieving because the Lord had already rejected Saul, and had a plan to raise up a new and “better” king.

The Lord’s gentle response to Samuel’s fear (vv. 2-3)

- Samuel is afraid to obey God (v2), but the Lord in His patience and gentleness, leads Samuel in his fear to walk in faith (v3).

1 Samuel 16:4-10 (ESV)- ⁴ Samuel did what the Lord commanded and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling and said, “Do you come peaceably?” ⁵ And he said, “Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. Consecrate yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice.” And he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice. ⁶ When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, “Surely the Lord’s anointed is before him.” ⁷ 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.” ⁸ Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, “Neither has the Lord chosen this one.” ⁹ Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, “Neither has the Lord chosen this one.” ¹⁰ And Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, “The Lord has not chosen these.”

“The Lord sees not as man sees...” (v7)

- Samuel looks at Eliab (v6) and immediately thinks he is the Lord’s chosen one because externally, he looks very much like a king: he is tall and handsome, just like Saul.
- The Lord is quick to correct Samuel, emphasizing that He does not see as man sees (external appearance), but He sees the heart.

* What is on the inside is far more important than any other physical attribute on the outside

1 Samuel 16:11-13 (ESV)- ¹¹ Then Samuel said to Jesse, “Are all your sons here?” And he said, “There remains yet the youngest, but behold, he is keeping the sheep.” And Samuel said to Jesse, “Send and get him, for we will not sit down till he comes here.” ¹² And he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome. And the Lord said, “Arise, anoint him, for this is he.” ¹³ Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon David from that day forward. And Samuel rose up and went to Ramah.

The “youngest”

- In the Hebrew, the word also means “smallest.” Clearly Jesse did not consider his youngest to be significant, as he did not even invite him to the sacrifice.
- One way to understand David’s attractive physical description here (**v12**), is to understand it as a negative description. The author is highlighting the fact that this “youngest” (or smallest) son, did not look anything like what people would have expected a king to look like: tall, strong, mighty, and powerful.
- David on the outside, did not look like a king, but on the inside he had a heart of a godly king: he was a man after God’s own heart.

The Spirit of God with David “from that day forward”

- Contrary to Saul (who will have the Spirit of God “departing” from him), David will have the Spirit of God with him for all of his days.
- The Holy Spirit is the One who will enable this “small”, insignificant boy, to become a great king, accomplishing the great purposes that God has called him to.

The Implications

1. Thank God for the gospel!

- * The Lord “sees” (Heb.= ra-ah) our hearts

Tim Keller on the heart:

The heart is used as a metaphor for the seat of our most basic orientation, our deepest commitments — what we trust the most; it is what we most love and hope in, what we most treasure, what captures our imagination. Every heart has an inclination, something it is directed toward. The direction of the heart, then, controls everything — our thinking, feeling, and decisions and actions. What we most love we find reasonable, desirable, and doable. Whatever we cherish in our hearts most controls the whole person.

Question: What does God see when he looks in your heart?

- If God sees every detail of our hearts, how can we not be condemned for all the ways we fail to love the Lord?!

:

Romans 8:34 (ESV)- ⁴ Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

Because of the gospel, everything is different now with regards to how God sees our hearts

2. Pray that God would change our hearts

- * Only God, by His grace, through the power of the Holy Spirit, can transform our hearts!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. In this chapter, we see the Lord rebuking Samuel for continuing to grieve over Saul, when God had already spoken of Saul’s rejection, and the future of a new king. Have there been situations, things, or people in your life that perhaps you have grieved over for too long? In other words, were there times when your grieving actually preventing you from being able to see, hope in, and rejoice in what God was doing? Share about these experiences. If none, how can we help others move from grieving too long, to start hoping and trusting in God?

2. In the story, Samuel is told by the Lord not to look upon the external appearance of a man because the Lord looks on the heart. In what ways do you focus too much on external appearance? What does this say about the condition or direction of your heart? What are some ways that can help you focus less on outward appearance?

3. In the text, the main lesson we learn is that God sees the heart. What is one specific area of your heart that God needs to work on? What steps can you take this week to allow God to work on this area of your heart? How can your fellow brothers and sisters keep you accountable in this?