

Willow River Parish: Clear Lake, Deer Park, and Faith Family

Title: Obedience and Disobedience

Lesson: 1 Samuel 15:34-16:13 NRSV

15 ³⁴ Then Samuel went to Ramah; and Saul went up to his house in Gibeah of Saul. ³⁵ Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death, but Samuel grieved over Saul. And the LORD was sorry that he had made Saul king over Israel.

16 The LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons." ² Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears of 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 Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you." 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 He said, "Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice." And he sanctified 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 now before the LORD." 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 does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart." ⁸ Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. 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 Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen any of these." ¹¹ Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here." ¹² He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. The LORD said, "Rise and anoint him; for this is the one." ¹³ Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.

(SS1) The history of the Kings of Israel began with Saul, and David succeeded, and Solomon succeeded David, and many kings succeeded until Israel was destroyed. However, the Bible describes that there is no king who followed God's will more than David. (1 Kings 11:4, 6) So, his nickname was a man after God's heart, who will carry out all His wishes. (Acts 13:22)

Of course, David also made mistakes in his life, but for most of his life, the Bible describes how he obeyed God's will. So, he is one of the biblical figures respected by people. Maybe that's why people named David are often found in the United States.

King David, respected by so many, but even he was only the youngest, who was ignored by his family and just did shepherding until he was anointed by Samuel.

(SS2) At the time when David was keeping the sheep, the king of Israel was Saul. Saul was the first king appointed at the request of the Israelites when Israel had no king unlike

other nations. He is described as more handsome and taller than others. He was a competent man chosen by Prophet Samuel. He was capable enough to win the war against Amalek after becoming king, but he had a problem, which was that he was not obedient to God's will. So, Samuel declared Saul politically dead saying, "Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has also rejected you from being king." (1 Sam 15:23) Saul became a king rejected by God and was regarded as a failed king. He was smart but dishonest. He didn't listen to God's voice because he was busy getting wealth from the battlefield. His disobedience was repeated several times, and he did what God didn't want.

(SS3) When Samuel heard that God regrets making Saul king, he was angry, and cried out to the LORD all night. (1 Sam 15:11) Whenever Samuel criticized and rebuked Saul to return to God's will, he hid his mistakes and made excuses, saying "I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, but I brought the best things to sacrifice to the LORD." (1 Sam 15:20-21) And, Samuel left a famous saying, "To obey is better than sacrifice." (1 Sam 22) What God wanted him was to obey God's will.

Eventually, Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death, but he grieved over Saul. (35) For Saul, the bigger tragedy was that the LORD was sorry that he had made Saul king over Israel. (35)

The life that God regrets is like a lifeless being. How tragic and meaningless is it?

(SS4) God touches Samuel's heart to look at future hope instead of frustration and sadness. He followed God's will and went to Bethlehem to choose the man who will rule Israel under the name of performing sacrifice to the LORD. The people of Bethlehem must have been worried that Saul's anger would reach Bethlehem because his relationship with Samuel was so bad. When the elders of the city met Samuel, they were afraid and asked: "Do you come peaceably?" (4) They did not know why Samuel came to Bethlehem, but they would have been afraid of Saul's retribution.

The purpose he came there was to find a new king instead of Saul, who left the Spirit of God, and to anoint him in advance. But he didn't say this to anyone because Saul was still alive. So, he showed them the sacrifice he brought and said, "Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD, sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice," (1 Sam 16:5) and sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited to the sacrifice.

(SS5) Before the sacrifice began, he looked on the sons of Jesse one by one like an interview. When he looked on Eliab and thought, "Surely the LORD's anointed is now before the LORD." (6) But, the LORD's standard was different from Samuel.

Each country has different standards for interviews when taking job tests. In the United States, interviewers ask, "What can you do well?" In German, they ask, "How skilled are

you at this job?" In Japan, they ask "Which college did you graduate from?" In South Korea, they ask, "What is your father's job?"

As I said, God's standard was very different from Samuel. The Bible tells that "People look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart." (7) Then Jesse called the second son, the third son through the seventh son and made him pass before Samuel, but nobody was chosen by God. Samuel felt something strange because God clearly said, "I have provided for myself a king among his sons." (1) So, he said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?" and he said, "There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep." And he said to him, "Bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here." (11)

(SS6) Today, everyone in the world knows the name of Jesse's youngest son, but when he was first mentioned in the Bible, he was called the youngest. His father, Jesse, only called David the youngest. In Hebrew language, the word, the youngest, has the nuance of a trivial and unimportant person. He was the youngest and a boy who was uninvited and keeps the sheep.

He was an excluded son of his father's. Even in the eyes of the people, David would not have attracted much attention because he was the youngest and a boy. At the time shepherding was something that anyone could do without any special ability or training. He stayed in the fields day after day and would not have been treated preciously in the house. By the way, God's choice is amazing. God's eyes on the heart, not the outward appearance show the greatness of the Bible.

When Samuel looked on David, he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. (12) He took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the presence of his brothers according to God's word. (13) David was the youngest, and was not important in his family, but God saw his heart and anointed him. He was surrounded by his father and brothers and was anointed. Perhaps neither his brothers nor his father nor Samuel thought that the youngest would be anointed.

Nevertheless, the story of him becoming king in the future, and the story of him being called the ancestor of Messiah, gives hope to those who are ignored in the world. He was a son who was not even in the eyes of his father, but he was in God's eyes. It's amazing news. What is in God's eyes was not decided by vote, not by appearance, not by person ability or promising possibility. God's choice was only grace.

March 10, 2020 was my interview date for Certification and Local Pastor license. It rained a little that morning, and there was a rainbow. My pastor of the church where I served as an intern pastor came to there to pray for me. She was a skilled pastor and had an experience of District Superintendent and knew about Cal-Pac Conference very well. She often told me that I would be serving the church as a Full-Time Local Pastor after

graduation. So, I thought I could receive an appointment. But as you know, in a little while, COVID-19 began to spread rapidly in the United States. Most churches closed the doors and were struggling with financial hardships. I waited and waited and waited for Appointment news from the D.S. until mid-May but couldn't get any news. Most of the United Methodist Conferences were having their Annual Conference in a month, so it was too late to knock the doors of other conferences. All I could do at the time was go to the seminary chapel every night and bow down and pray. After praying Esther and I took a walk and asked each other, "Where will we be one year later?" In conclusion, I am standing here today by the grace of the LORD. The Bishop and the cabinets sent me here, but I believe that God called and sent me here.

(SS7) The spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. Now his life has hardships, trials, and challenges. If he lived in his father's house by being called the youngest, his life would be easier. But, Helen Keller tells that "Life is either a daring adventure or nothing."

David's story makes us reflect on ourselves in our daily lives, in our normal lives.

(SS8) Job 8:7 tells that "Though your beginning was small, your latter days will be great." He started out as a shepherd and the youngest. No one considered him important. However, after receiving anointment, his life was revealed to the world. His name is mentioned 848 times in the Old Testament, and 55 times in the New Testament.

May we live conscious of God's eyes, not just for our profit, but for God's good and kind will, not to be afraid of the present insignificance and helplessness, but to rejoice in God's eyes, and to believe that God is constantly calling and leading our lives. May the Spirit of the Lord hold on to us and renew us day by day. Amen.

[For Faith Family Church, Like Job 8:7: "Though your beginning was small, your latter days will be great," Faith Family church's history just began, but may it be a grain of wheat that conveys the love of the LORD to our community and bear many fruits in our lives.]