

FBC Service Sunday May 21 2023 From Ordinary to Extraordinary 1 Samuel 16:1-13

We've all experienced life-changing days, days that we will never forget, days that altered and shaped our lives. **Some of them were very good days.**

I'll never forget that December day in Carrickfergus, Northern Ireland when I gave my life to Christ. That day changed me for ever.

I'll never forget the day I stood in front of a church filled with people and said "I do" to my bride Wyn McAllister.

I'll never forget seeing the sun rise over Belfast Lough as I rushed Wyn to the hospital for the birth of our first child Michael.

I'll never forget when I said goodbye to my mother and father, my brothers and sister, and emigrated to Canada.

I'll never forget moving to the farm in 1976.

Some of those life-changing days though were not so good for me.

I'll never forget severely criticizing a very dear brother and close friend, leader of the gospel male choir I sang in, for attending a secular Multiple Sclerosis concert.

(His brother had rapidly advancing MS) I ripped him good and caused him and others great anguish and heart ache. All because of my own self-importance and personal self-righteousness! **How very wrong I was!**

I'll never forget down on my knees pleading for healing for my son Jon seriously ill in St Albert. AB.

Some life-changing days catch us by surprise. They start out ordinary but become extraordinary. They begin with our normal hum drum routines but end up marking us so that we never forget them.

Maybe it was the day of the big accident? Maybe it was the day you got a promotion or got laid off?

I don't think any of us will ever forget that routine morning on September 11 2001 when we first heard the news that terrorists had crashed airliners into the World Trade Centre towers and the Pentagon.

Certainly that ordinary day became extraordinary and most surely changed the course of history.

In our text in 1 Samuel 16, we see an ordinary day that became extraordinary for a young shepherd boy from Bethlehem. A day he would never forget as David was anointed king over Israel.

No angel trumpet heralded this day. No faces looked out of heaven. The sun arose that morning according to its custom. With the first glimmer of light, the boy was on his way to lead his flock to pasture.

He attended to his many duties, watching for the weak, healing the sick, and seeking for strays.

In his spare moments, the music of his harp filled the air.

It was an ordinary beginning to what would be an extraordinary day.

The prophet Samuel had come to David's father's house to anoint the next king of Israel from among Jesse's eight sons.

What a surprise was in store for them! No one, not Samuel, not Saul, not Jesse, not the seven older brothers and certainly not David, would have ever guessed that God had chosen this simple shepherd boy to reign over His people.

Yet in God's sovereign will, David was His man. Psalm 78:70-71 says, *"He chose his servant David, calling him from the sheep pens. He took David from tending the ewes and lambs and made him the shepherd of Jacob's descendants, God's own people, Israel."*

God says in Isaiah 55:9, *"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts."*

God can take the ordinary and make it extraordinary because;

Our Plans are Ordinary, God's Plans are Extraordinary (vv.1-5).

God's plans rarely make sense to us. Samuel, the experienced man of God was no exception. He couldn't make heads or tails of the dilemma Israel was facing. He was downcast and depressed. He was frustrated and confused. The people wanted a king – he didn't.

Even when God spoke clearly to him he didn't eagerly agree but offered an excuse.

Let this be a reminder to us that because leaders are old and grey headed, they don't always have all the answers. **However, as the story makes clear, God's plan is always right.**

It didn't make sense to Samuel that Saul should become king and then God later reject him.

It didn't make sense that God would select a king from an obscure family from a one-horse town like Bethlehem.

It didn't make sense to Abraham that at 75 years of age that he should leave his life in Ur and follow the voice of God across the wilderness not knowing where he was going.

It didn't make sense when God promised him and his wife they would have a son of their own in their old age.

It didn't make sense to Moses when God told him he would lead Israel out of their slavery in Egypt.

It didn't make sense to Joshua and Caleb that Israel could conquer the land of Canaan.

It didn't make sense to Gideon that 300 men armed with trumpets and torches could defeat an innumerable army of the Midianites.

It didn't make sense that those weak, cowardly disciples could turn the world upside down with the powerful message of Jesus' resurrection.

It didn't make sense that a vile persecutor of the early church like Saul could become the mighty builder of the church, Paul. **God's plans rarely make sense to us.**

Like Samuel, like all these people of faith, when we know God's Word, when we hear the direction of His Spirit speaking to our hearts, the only option is to do what the Lord says and trust that His direction is the best. **Our Plans are Ordinary, God's Plans are Extraordinary.**

Our Choices are Ordinary, God's Choices are Extraordinary (vv.6-12).

Samuel Looked at the Outside, God Examined the Heart.

Directed by the Lord to choose a king from Jesse's sons, Samuel began looking them over. Jesse is a proud father introducing his sons to the man of God.

One after another they paraded before Samuel, and again and again Samuel heard, *"Neither is this the one the Lord has chosen."* God made it clear that he had not chosen any of the seven sons presented to Samuel.

In the midst of this sequence of seven sons, God gives Samuel and us today a vital principle in verse 7. *"For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance but the Lord looks at the heart."*

When I look at you, I notice whether you're tall or short, heavy or thin, young or old. I notice the colour of your skin, the length of your hair and what clothes you're wearing. If we're not careful, we "pigeon hole" people based on their appearance.

We tend to unfairly make judgments about people just from their looks. **But God looks beyond the "outward appearance" and peers into "the heart."** He looks at a person's character. He sees who we really are when no one else is watching.

God seems to be saying to Samuel, "You're looking at the physique, the brawn, and the muscle. **I'm checking out the heart.** None of these guys fit the bill because I have chosen a man with a heart like mine."

I don't know about you, but I've made some pretty bad assumptions based on outward appearances and lived to regret it. I wish I could see people's hearts and know their character, but I can't. Only God can do that. That's why we turn to God for discernment and examine lives by His Word.

When we judge other people by their appearance, we miss so much.

We miss out on friendships, we miss the potential in others, and we miss the true value in the other person.

God's Choices are Sometimes Hard to Understand. Even Samuel questioned it. His choices are not like our choices.

In His infinite wisdom God often chooses those we would pass over to do His work. We look at the outward appearance and pass people off as ordinary. **God looks at the heart and declares them - extraordinary.**

The Greek culture of the New Testament was much like our culture today. They only valued people with beauty and brains. If you weren't slim, trim and athletic, if you didn't have a degree from the right university, you were nothing, a nobody.

The Apostle Paul reprimanded that philosophy in 1 Corinthians.1:26-29. This passage explains the wisdom of God's unique choices.

"Remember, dear brothers and sisters, that few of you were wise in the world's eyes or powerful or wealthy when God called you. Instead, God chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise.

And he chose things that are powerless to shame those who are powerful. God chose things despised by the world; things counted as nothing at all, and used them to bring to nothing what the world considers important. As a result, no one can ever boast in the presence of God."

In the next chapter, Paul speaks of when he first came to the church at Corinth, *"When I first came to you, dear brothers and sisters, I didn't use lofty words and impressive wisdom to tell you the testimony about God."*

In fact he says, *"I came to you in weakness—timid and trembling. And my message and my preaching were very plain. Rather than using clever and persuasive speeches, I relied only on the power of the Holy Spirit. I did this so you would trust not in human wisdom but in the power of God."*

Look around the sanctuary. What kind of people do you see? Who among us stands out? Yet, God has chosen us to be His children.

Just as Jesus chose a rag-tag group of fishermen and tax collectors to be His disciples, He has chosen us. **We're ordinary people that God has declared to be extraordinary,** not because of who we are but because of what He is doing in us.

2 Corinthians 4:7 says, *"We ourselves are like fragile clay jars containing this great treasure. This makes it clear that our great power is from God, not from ourselves."*

In biblical times, there were no banks. People hid their money, jewels and other valuable in ordinary clay pots and buried them in the ground.

In the same sense, we're just ordinary pieces of pottery into which God has placed His priceless Spirit.

We're ordinary nobodies that God has declared to be extraordinary somebodies!

Jim Elliot once said, "We are nobodies telling everybody about somebody who can save anybody."

Our Power is Ordinary, God's Power is Extraordinary (v.13).

Samuel must have been confused. Something is amiss here.

After all, had He not done what God told him to do? He went to the home of Jesse. He looked over every son in the house and God said no to each of them.

In exasperation, he says to Jesse, *"The Lord has not chosen these... Are these all the sons you have?"*

Only then does it dawn on Jesse. Only then does he remember David out minding the sheep. He says, *"There is still the youngest, he's out tending the sheep."* You could probably see the unbelief on his face. How could it possibly be David!

He's thinking, "No way it's David. He's a shepherd not a king." *Nevertheless, Samuel says, "Send for him at once, we will not sit down to eat until he arrives."*

Swindoll comments: It's highly significant to me that Jesse didn't even have his youngest son in the room. It's remarkable, isn't it, how Jesse reveals two very common mistakes parents make.

Number one, he didn't have an equal appreciation for all of his children.

And number two, he failed to cultivate a mutual self-respect among them.

As the youngest son David was probably used to being overlooked, unnoticed, discounted. He was just a teenager at this time.

Jesse saw his youngest as nothing more than the one who tended the sheep. Imagine, Jesse and his sons were invited to dinner with one of the most important men in Israel and David was not on the guest list. He was snubbed! He's out in the hills with the flock.

Even his own father thought David was too young or insignificant to invite to the dinner. He was certainly an unlikely candidate for whatever Samuel was looking for.

A messenger has to be sent to fetch him and remain with the sheep. It takes a little while, but at last the youngest son of Jesse stands before the prophet.

It's astonishing that Jesse had no idea of David's wisdom and bravery, and spoke of him as the most unfit. God in His providence, so ordered it, that the appointment of David might more clearly appear to be a divine purpose, and not the design either of Samuel or Jesse.

The Bible says David was "dark and handsome." His hair may have been tinged with red. His skin was tanned from being outdoors. One good-looking guy with sparkling eyes that drew you to him!

However, Samuel now had the proper perspective. It didn't matter if he was handsome or ugly. **God was looking at his heart and that was all that mattered.** Then Samuel heard the words for which he had come to Bethlehem, "*this is the one - anoint him!*"

As soon as God said, "*anoint him; for this is the one!*" Samuel "*took the horn of oil*" that he had brought along and "*anointed him in the presence of his family.*" The oil drenches David's reddish hair and runs down his face and neck.

This memory was no doubt in David's mind when he later wrote, "*You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over*" (Psa.23:5).

Notice David was anointed with much more than oil. The oil was merely symbolic of the fact that God's Spirit had come upon David in a mighty way. Up to this point, David was a shepherd boy.

However, when "*the Spirit of the Lord came upon him,*" he had all the power and authority he would need to reign as king over God's people.

May God help to us see beyond what we see with our eyes and try to see people's hearts.

To see;

Our Plans are Ordinary, God's Plans are Extraordinary (vv.1-5)

God's Plans often make Little Sense to Us.

Our Power is Ordinary, God's Power is Extraordinary

God looks at the heart and declares them – extraordinary

Samuel obeyed God's Direction (vv.4-5). But only after some objections.

He did what the Lord said to do. That's a statement worth underlining.

There's a path of blessing for us when we have clear instructions from the Lord, and like Samuel, attempt to carry them out.