

Prayer

We praise You Great Lord of all Creation
You are the One who makes all things perfect!
You are the One who knows what is right and wrong!
You are the One who graciously forgives our sin!
You are the One who liberates us for Glory!
Alleluia – AMEN!

Other Prayer Suggestions

Weekly Theme: Bereavement

Pray for all those who experience continued difficulty as the years go by and do not manage to cope with bereavement well. Pray that we all may be sensitive to such need.

On-going prayers

- Praise God for the blessings of life
- Pray for those who are starving because of world food shortages
- Pray for Aid agencies doing their best in continuing difficulties

Meditation

Lord Jesus, You are special

You came as the King of all the earth;
Teaching people the truth about God,
Demonstrating Your authority over evil,
And performing great signs and wonders.

You came as the Servant of all people;
Doing all the work the Father gave You,
Showing commitment to the path of love,
And submitting to God's will on the Cross.

You came as a Man, yet still being God;
Living side by side with friends and sinners,
Healing, liberating, caring, listening,
And giving up everything to share our life.

You came as God, the Eternal Word;
Showing Your people the way to the Father,
Debating with Jew and with Gentile,
And proving Your glory in victorious power!

Jesus, You are special

Bible Study - 1 Samuel 16:11-13

¹¹ Samuel said to Jesse, 'Are all your sons here?' And he said, 'There is still one left, the youngest, and he is keeping the sheep.' 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. He was healthy, had beautiful eyes, and was of striking appearance. The LORD said, 'Rise and anoint him; 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.

Review

At the weekends, our alternative studies will pick up some of the famous stories of David in the Old Testament, by way of contrast to the main New Testament studies. Some of the stories of David are well known, but many are not, and they can sometimes be a useful spiritual guide. The Old Testament is described by the New as for 'teaching and instruction' (2 Tim 3:16), and that is how we shall use it.

How is it that God puts his hand on anyone's life and guides them for a purpose? This is a mystery which we can never fully answer, because none of the stories in the Bible will give you a blueprint. But it is clear that God does choose people for special tasks, and always has done. If there had been a blueprint for God's method of selection for a King of Israel, then the prophet Samuel would surely have known what it was. Perhaps when he first selected Saul as King over all Israel from the family of Kish, he thought that he had managed the whole matter of selecting a king properly. He had followed the Lord's instructions, but things had gone wrong and Saul had turned out to be a tyrant, acting on his own will and not respecting God's laws and requirements (1 Sam 15).

Samuel was distressed and not a little confused by this turn of events, but he followed the Lord's will again, and it took great courage for him to accept that he should go in search of a King of Israel again. Often, when we have managed to get things wrong, we decide not to try again, but Samuel had the courage not only to try again, but do so in extreme danger. Saul was still alive and becoming dangerously aggressive and isolated as a king whose authority was not fully respected by all Israel. What Samuel did in selecting David from the family of Jesse was done undercover; it was treason, and everyone knew it.

If you read through the first thirteen verses of 1 Samuel 16, you will notice that Samuel was very cagey about what he was being called to do, and also very impatient. I am not sure whether Jesse was scared of Samuel, or Samuel of Jesse, for they both knew that Saul's authority as King was becoming non-existent, and they both knew what he was doing and what was going wrong with the Israelite monarch. But Samuel persisted in following the Lord's command, even if he did leave and go to Ramah immediately after the anointing without even offering any advice to the elect David. Samuel had been faithful, but it is easy to see that David was probably left wondering what had happened.

The Bible does not record what David felt. It is content for us to observe that he was a handsome young man, full of the knowledge of sheep and of the field, and full of potential which at this stage was evident to God at least. David was probably fully aware of what had been done to him, and we can only imagine what it must have been like for a young man to come to terms with being anointed king of his people in such a manner. What would he do? Would he tell everyone about him to be obedient to him and grasp all the authority he could? The shepherd boy knew that if he tried to act in an authoritarian way with sheep, they would all run away from him; he knew their respect had to be gained through care and over time, and so it would be for men and women. So David made no move at all; he followed his life as it panned out before him, confident that the Lord who had kept him safe in the fields and had led him safe thus far would do so in the future.

This is the spiritual faith of David which is an inspiration to us. Whatever task the Lord has given us, we must follow what is before us to do, even if it is to do little more than 'feed the sheep'. David may have gone from his anointing to do just this, not fully realising that what he was about to do was to learn how to win the hearts and minds of a nation. When Jesus said 'Feed my sheep' to Peter after the resurrection (John 21:16,17), it was a simple instruction even though Peter did not fully understand what Jesus was saying at the time.

Eventually, through time, the saying has come to signify the pastoral role of a leader of God's people throughout the church. God can create immense good out of humble obedience.

Questions (for use in groups)

1. Do you know why it was that Saul's kingship came 'off the rails'. Can you recall occasions in the life of your church where leadership has gone wrong, and why?
2. Why do you think that God called David to be a leader of His people?
3. In what was can you be obedient to God? Can you give any examples of how obedience has been the spur to greater things in God's service?

Discipleship

Personal comment:

This description of the election and anointing of David to the throne of Israel is a wonderful picture of the way God works to make good out of what was a potential disaster. Saul had been the wrong choice as a king, but now He turned this around. He does the same in so many ways today that we may not notice all He is doing.

Ideas for discipleship programme

- *There may have been moments in your life when you have felt 'specially chosen. Recall these and see if there are any lessons for you to learn about how God has used your life.*
- *How is a church leader anointed today? Discuss with your one of your church leaders how they came to be appointed.*
- *Pray about the future of God's people today, and pray for a 'David' to lead them.*

Final Prayer

Bless us this day, Lord Jesus. Bring praise to our lips and open our hearts to offer You the highest praise our hearts can offer. Speak through spiritual tongues which transport us to the throne of grace and into the presence of Almighty God Himself, and may our praises be worthy in His presence; AMEN