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# 1 SAMUEL 16:7-17:18

1 Samuel Series

[PRAYER] Lord, we quiet our hearts now. We want to come before you as humble people, recognizing our own weakness, recognizing our own sin. Not intentional sometimes, it's just that it comes out in ways that we don't expect and we need the strength that you provide. We thank you for your grace that washes over us and forgives us of our sin. We thank you for your love and your care for each one of us in a very personal way. Lord, we know that you've given us your word as a way of speaking to us so that we can have that standard in our lives by which to measure our behavior and our actions and our hearts. We ask that you would use your word today in a powerful way. Give us a greater understanding of how we are to live this week and what you would have for us. Lord, I'm so thankful for the folks you've brought to this church, my brothers and sisters here. Together we open our hearts and ask you to speak to us this morning. In Jesus' name, amen.

Well we are in a study in 1 Samuel. If this is your first time here or if you have missed some of the early parts of the study, I want you to know that you are walking into something here that's really powerful. There's a lot of stuff going on in God's word in this particular area. In fact I would hope that you would experience a fresh wind of God blowing through here today and touching you in a very special way. Because God is very personal in the way that He interacts with us. He loves us in a very personal way. So I'm excited. If you're not excited there's enough excitement in this room between Ed and me about what God is doing here at Calvary Chapel Living Hope. So I want to invite you to look at God's word with me because there are some key truths here that we need to understand.

We came to that passage in 1 Samuel 16:7. It's the verse that talks about the heart. You've seen this verse before. It's the one that says that *the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.*

Now in our study of this passage or as we study God's word, I try not to be too academic. I could be academic. We could talk about how there's 750 times when the word *heart* is used in the Bible. The word *love* is the Old Testament Hebrew word. The Greek word is *kardia*. I do that kind of study when I'm preparing my message. But my primary goal is not education; it's transformation because that's God's goal for us. We already know more than we're doing. We need to transform who we are and the Bible is very practical and relevant for our lives.

Let's take this verse for a minute. Young people, I want you to listen to what I have to say for a moment. It says there that *man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.* How is that going to apply to you in your life? Let me just make a suggestion. When

you're getting ready to get married and you're choosing a spouse, you want to apply this verse. You don't want to just look on the outward appearance, what the person looks like or what the person is doing or even compatibility things that you have in common with that person. You want to know their heart. You don't want to just say, "Wow that person has potential to be a great husband or a great wife." You want to be able to know their heart. The heart contains, as we saw last week, tendencies. So you're not wishing that this is a person that you can marry. This is a person you're seeing the patterns that exist there already.

How does he treat his parents? Because those patterns of how he treats his parents are very important for you because you're going to see that kind of treatment in your own relationship with him.

How does she handle offenses? Or when she's irritated or annoyed does she get angry? Because if that's her pattern that you're seeing into her heart, you need to check that. That's a very important consideration.

What happens when there's work that needs to be done but they're tired? Do they give up? Do they just sit down and watch TV or do they persevere? That perseverance is a heart quality.

So as you are applying God's word to your life you want to think about practically who you are and what God is doing in your life. God wants us to look at the heart, not just at behavior. In a marriage relationship we're looking at the heart and in parenting we're looking at the heart. We're trying to understand what that means. What does it mean to not look like man does? Because our temptation is just to look at the behavior of a person and not look at their hearts. If we can start looking at their hearts and understand more, we'll have deeper understanding and it will help us tremendously.

This passage is a strategic one in 1 Samuel 16 and we see it quoted elsewhere in our lives. We continually come back to this verse. It will be quoted often. So you need to know where it comes from and where it is. I'm going to pick up the passage, starting in verse 7 and I'm going to read some portions of it in order to understand a little bit more about what God is saying in this passage.

1 Samuel 16:7 – *But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."*

*Then Jesse called Abinadab (the second son) and had him pass in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, "The Lord has not chosen this one either." Jesse then had Shammah pass by, but Samuel said, "Nor has the Lord chosen this one." Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to him, "The Lord has not chosen these." So he asked Jesse, "Are these all the sons you have?"* Because he's got a problem here. He knows he's come to this meeting, God has told him that He's going to anoint a king from the sons, but he doesn't know who that's going to be. So he's expecting God to speak and work in that situation.

*"Are these all the sons you have?"*

*“There is still the youngest,” Jesse answered. “He is tending the sheep.” Samuel said, “Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives.”*

*So he sent for him and had him brought in. He was glowing with health and had a fine appearance and handsome features. Then the Lord said, “Rise and anoint him; this is the one.” So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon David. Samuel then went to Ramah.*

Just imagine the story and imagine David being chosen to come in. Come on, David. You’ve got to come in to this meeting. And in the midst of his older brothers, seven of them, Samuel says, “That’s the one. I pick him.” Can you imagine how he felt? He felt that he was the chosen one out of all of that group. I don’t know if he kind of stuck his chest out or if he was humble. I don’t know, but he must have felt something inside. This sense of yes, wow, I’m the chosen one here in this particular situation.

That same feeling that you can imagine David was experiencing in that moment is that feeling God wants us to have because He uses the same words in Ephesians 1:4 when He says we are chosen. *For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.* You can experience that same sense of yes, He’s picked me out.

I remember when I was a kid and at recess all the boys would line up by the backstop, the two captains would come, and they’d pick the kids who they wanted to be on their team. First this guy would pick, then this guy would pick. I would be waiting by the backstop and when they finally picked me, I’d go, “Yes.” There’s a sense of I’ve been chosen. That’s the same feeling that God wants us to experience in our lives and live up to that calling. We are chosen by God. He has set that up for us and it’s a beautiful picture for what’s happening. David was chosen and so are we.

Now I want you to look at the very next verse. We’re going to look at verse 14 now, which sets the stage for the arrival of the hero on the scene. So as the stage is set, it’s kind of an interesting picture. It kind of takes us into some interesting stuff. So let’s go here. A very interesting verse that sets the stage of what’s to come. Look at verse 14. *Now the Spirit of the Lord had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord tormented him.*

Don’t you find those words strange? *An evil spirit from the Lord.* Does your theology of God allow you to see God in such a big picture that He is responsible for and allows certain things to happen in lives that might be difficult or bad?

Let me put this into perspective. We know that Saul was disobedient to the Lord. I don’t know if you remember a couple weeks back I showed you the picture of the umbrella. The umbrella was being under the obedience of God. When you step outside of the umbrella through disobedience, you open yourself up to all kinds of bad stuff. That’s really the message of the previous chapter. When Saul disobeyed and he lost the kingship, Samuel said to him that God loves two things – obedience, *He loves a contrite heart.* He loves those things more than sacrifice. He says *disobedience is like the sin of idolatry.* Wow. So when you open yourself up through disobedience, as Saul is doing, there are some bad things that can happen.

Now I think God is doing two things in this passage, or at least I want to suggest that as I look at this passage there are two things that maybe God (I don't pretend to know what God is doing in all of this stuff) is taking advantage of in this situation. I want to take a brief tangent here and just talk about how God uses the challenges of life to help us.

I would suggest that one of the things He's doing here in this situation is He's using this evil spirit, which by the way is going to produce depression and anger, outrage in Saul. I think He may be using this in Saul to provoke Saul to see that Saul has done the wrong thing. Sometimes God allows us to feel the pain of living in this world if we choose to disobey Him. There are a lot of consequences to disobeying the Lord. But when we're living underneath as that umbrella He protects us. But if you step out of that obedience and you're in the disobedience then you're just exposed to all kinds of bad stuff. That's a high motivation for me to want to stay true to the Lord and obey Him. Maybe Saul would see through the full force of evil that can come into a person when they're not obeying the Lord. What that looks like might motivate him to return.

It's that idea that we see in the New Testament in the passage about church discipline in 1 Corinthians 5. In 1 Corinthians 5 there was a problem in the Corinthian church that there was a man in the church who was involved in sexual sin and at the same time he's involved in sexual sin he's participating in the life of the church and kind of boasting about it and the church is accepting him as if "we're kind of an inclusive church" kind of thing. So they're boasting about it. So Paul gives some very firm instructions to them about what to do. You need to put this person out of the fellowship, you need to discipline this person. *Hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord.* In other words the goal is repentance. The goal is restoration. But if this person is going to disobey and do the wrong thing, they need to experience the damage that that incurs in a person. That's really painful.

So the Corinthians apparently did this under Paul's leadership and they disciplined the man. So Paul in hearing about this had to write another letter because the discipline lasted too long. So the next verse in 2 Corinthians says this in chapter 2 – *The punishment inflicted upon him by the majority is sufficient. Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him.* So he repented. Let's bring him back into the fellowship.

There's this sense in which sometimes we experience the awesome scary damage and dangers of not being in God's program and not being part of His kingdom program. We're just motivated. I got to get back into the center of God's will. Maybe you've been there. When you're doing the wrong thing, it's going to hurt you. You might get away with some things for a while, but in the end it's going to damage you. Bad things are going to happen and you're going to be prompted to move back into the center. I think that's what's happening here in this passage.

Second thing that we see in this idea of this evil spirit that's tormenting Saul is that it opens the way for David to enter the stage now. In other words, God is working in the whole picture here. As this bad thing is happening to Saul, it is the opening for David to step onto the stage. So we experience God in this bigger picture than we often imagine Him to be. He's looking at all of the

things at the same time. Here is David now stepping into the picture as we continue the passage in verse 15.

*Saul's attendants said to him, "See, an evil spirit from God is tormenting you. Let our lord command his servants here to search for someone who can play the lyre. He will play when the evil spirit from God comes on you, and you will feel better."*

*So Saul said to his attendants, "Find someone who plays well (you know how it is when someone plays bad) and bring him to me."*

*One of the servants answered, "I have seen a son of Jesse of Bethlehem who knows how to play the lyre. He is a brave man and a warrior. He speaks well and is a fine-looking man. And the Lord is with him."*

David now comes onto the scene. David is going to be the hero here and the next time I teach (which will be in two weeks, because next week although I'll be here Ed is going to teach) we're going to go into the story about David and Goliath. But now I just want to talk about David as a hero because there's a real important message for me here that I really like.

This is the message that God is looking for heroes today and He's looking for heroes among a group of people who are demonstrating hero-like qualities in the small things now. Wherever we are in the small things, God wants to use us now in those things.

There are a couple things about David that I think are very significant that I think we want to take note of. Remember, he's a young person. So you young people who are listening want to pay attention to this idea because this is who he was and this is who we can be. The first thing we learn about David is he is a worshiper. He is a guy who played this musical instrument, but not only knew how to play the instrument, he was playing it and singing and designing worship songs as we know from God's word because seventy-five of the psalms are dedicated to David.

Now I can feel a little bit for this because I grew up learning how to play the piano. I practiced the piano for twelve years. That's a long time to play a musical instrument. Because when you practice the piano it means you're practicing most every day. It's your routine. It's part of what you do. I certainly learned a lot about music, but I think probably the most valuable thing I learned in practicing the piano was perseverance.

Perseverance is that ability to hang in there even after you feel like quitting. You know the first five minutes of playing the piano is not perseverance, that's entertainment. It's the next twenty-five minutes or forty minutes that you play to make your time up for the day, that's the perseverance. Hanging in there after you feel like quitting. It's that perseverance that's often learned by practicing an instrument that allows you to advance further in your life.

Notice David is going to have to persevere many, many times under lots of pressure in his life and his ability to hang in there and work on practicing an instrument I'm sure contributed to that perseverance.

I think a lot of young people today want the benefits without the work. I'd like the privileges, but I don't want to do the work to get them. We watch TV and if you don't like what you see on TV, you just grab the remote control and switch it to something else. Well what does that do when you're in a marriage relationship? I don't like what I see here, I'm going to grab the remote control and switch to somebody else? It takes perseverance to fall in love, deep love. It takes perseverance to have that depth and satisfaction in a marriage relationship. It takes perseverance to have job satisfaction. You can't just say, "I'm going to work in this... Oh this isn't good for me, I'm going to work somewhere else." There's something about staying somewhere, working in that job that develops this sense of satisfaction and I think that's part of what David is learning here. He was a guy who hung in there with that musical instrument, but he also worshiped the Lord. He became someone who fell in love with God and understood more about who He was.

It says in verse 19 – *Then Saul sent messengers to Jesse and said, "Send me your son David, who is with the sheep." So Jesse took a donkey loaded with bread, a skin of wine and a young goat and sent them with his son David to Saul.*

*David came to Saul and entered his service. Saul liked him very much, and David became one of his armor-bearers. Then Saul sent word to Jesse, saying, "Allow David to remain in my service, for I am pleased with him."*

*Whenever the spirit from God came on Saul, David would take up his lyre and play. Then relief would come to Saul; he would feel better, and the evil spirit would leave him.*

The lyre was a musical instrument, somewhat like our guitar today. In fact the Psalms use the term it was a ten-string lyre. So maybe there were others that had multiple strings of different numbers, but at least some of them had ten strings because that's at least what's mentioned in the psalm. But there's a sense in which the music had a power. It's the therapy that they used to help this guy deal with this problem that he was experiencing. I think that's important.

Have you ever said, "That song really touched me"? I think we can take that literally, not just figuratively. There's a way in which music somehow comes in, bypasses the intellect, and goes straight to our soul. In fact I would suggest that music is that magic key that somehow opens up even the hardest heart. Music has this way of penetrating our lives that nothing else can do. It bypasses the intellect.

We use worship here, of course, in our worship service. We're singing songs at first because we want to set our hearts and have our hearts ready for the message of God's word. That's part of why we sing and worship the Lord. It's preparing us for what's happening. So if you're inclined to come to church just for the main event, the sermon, then you're missing the most important things, probably, that are coming before it.

Our service really starts at 9:45. I don't know if you know that or not. But we start at 9:45, so if you're not here at 9:45 you're probably late. Because at 9:45 we start to gather, we fellowship, we eat food, we talk to each other, and we say hi to each other. There's that nurturing benefit to that at 9:45. Then we intentionally start at 10:05. I don't want you to think that we don't have a value of time. In fact I'm one of those people that's really punctual. But I had to wrestle with this

in my own heart because I see people fellowshiping and starting at 10:00 doesn't seem like a good idea to me. It seems better that we start at 10:05 intentionally so we can enjoy that fellowship time. Then we come into a time of worshiping, opening our hearts up to the Lord because that music that we sing together does something to our hearts. It prepares our hearts for what God wants to do on a deeper level.

David was a lover of worship. He was a guy who sat around in the evenings and probably sang to the sheep and as the fire was going down he's continuing to play on his lyre. I would suggest that before he came into the king and sang songs to the king he had been singing songs to the King of kings for a long time. He had prepared his heart for this opportunity. So it wasn't something unusual for him to come in and sing to the king. He was already doing that. He was already a worshiper. So when the opportunity to be a hero and get into the palace came, he was ready. He was already there.

He would sing songs I'm sure like *I Adore You* or *I Love You Jesus* (although Jesus wasn't then). It's the idea that it's those kind of worship songs that he just fell in love with God and knew Him personally. He sang in the morning, he sang in the evenings, he sang with the good times, he sang with the times that were pretty challenging.

In fact there was one time when the enemy was coming on him, guarding the house so he couldn't escape and the preamble to Psalm 59 tells us this and in the psalm he records this. I don't know whether the psalm was written while he was in the house in the night or it was afterward when he was rescued, but it says – *But I will sing of your strength, in the morning I will sing of your love; for you are my fortress, my refuge in times of trouble. O my Strength, I sing praise to you; you, O God, are my fortress, my loving God* (Psalm 59:16-17).

Here's a guy who knew how to worship when things were bad, when things were good. He knew the power of that. God is looking for heroes today. He's looking among a pool of people who are already demonstrating hero-like qualities in the small things.

If you look with me at the next chapter, chapter 17, it's the story of Goliath. I'm saving that story, but I'm going to read it through right now but I want to get to verse 12 because it tells us a little more about the hero.

*1 Samuel 17:1 – Now the Philistines gathered their forces for war and assembled at Sokoh in Judah. They pitched camp at Ephes Dammim, between Sokoh and Azekah. Saul and the Israelites assembled and camped in the Valley of Elah and drew up their battle line to meet the Philistines. The Philistines occupied one hill and the Israelites another, with the valley between them.*

*A champion named Goliath, who was from Gath, came out of the Philistine camp. His height was six cubits and a span. He had a bronze helmet on his head and wore a coat of scale armor of bronze weighing five thousand shekels; on his legs he wore bronze greaves, and a bronze javelin was slung on his back. His spear shaft was like a weaver's rod, and its iron point weighed six hundred shekels. His shield bearer went ahead of him.*

*Goliath stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, "Why do you come out and line up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not the servants of Saul? Choose a man and have him come down to me. If he is able to fight and kill me, we will become your subjects; but if I overcome him and kill him, you will become our subjects and serve us." Then the Philistine said, "This day I defy the armies of Israel! Give me a man and let us fight each other." On hearing the Philistine's words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified.*

In a couple weeks we'll amplify that. We'll understand the battle. We'll look at it a little bit more. But I want to look at the hero some more and that's where we come to this flashback now in verse 12.

*Now David was the son of an Ephrathite named Jesse, who was from Bethlehem in Judah. Jesse had eight sons, and in Saul's time he (Jesse) was very old. Jesse's three oldest sons had followed Saul to the war: The firstborn was Eliab; the second, Abinadab; and the third, Shammah. David was the youngest. The three oldest followed Saul, but David went back and forth from Saul to tend his father's sheep at Bethlehem.*

I just want to stop right there. Here's a guy who had two jobs. He was able to do more than one thing. He was doing this errand for his father, but he was also able to take care of the sheep. I think he learned some very important things about responsibility as he was working with that. He had a history with these sheep.

I'm sure he practiced a lot with this sling. He didn't just meet Goliath and all of a sudden use the sling for the first time. I'm sure he wound up that sling with the pile of stones and killed a lot of things before he met Goliath. In fact that Bible tells us that he also at one point met a bear. Maybe he was playing his lyre in the afternoon and saw this flash of brown and knew there was a problem, got up and starts running toward the sheep the same time the bear's running for the sheep. They see each other, they stop, they face off. And in that moment David is not afraid. He's not afraid of the bear. He takes out his sling and he's practiced this so much that he's able to fire away at that bear. Goes in and rescues the little lamb. Probably picks up that lamb and he says, "I am your shepherd. I will take care of you." It reminds me of how God takes care of me who is *my shepherd that I shall not want*.

He graduated to killing bears. The Bible tells us he even killed a lion before he goes to Goliath. He graduated through these different plans. I would suggest the things we're in now are often the preparation for what God wants us to be. So if we are always looking forward to doing these great things someday, we might be missing out on the things God wants to do in our lives right now.

When Saul called David to come in and play the music for him, it wasn't the first time he played the music. When David determined to fight Goliath, it wasn't the first time he picked up that sling. God was doing plenty of work before in his life before that.

Verse 16 – *For forty days the Philistine came forward every morning and evening and took his stand.*

*Now Jesse said to his son David, “Take this ephah of roasted grain and these ten loaves of bread for your brothers and hurry to their camp. Take along these ten cheeses to the commander of their unit. See how your brothers are and bring back some assurance from them. David again is responsible enough to do an errand. He can do a job well.*

I would suggest that employers today are looking for people who can be responsible, who want to advance them to new places. Who are the people who get those jobs? People who are proving themselves and demonstrating that they have hero qualities before they get there.

God is doing the same thing. God wants to take us. He wants to do great things in our lives and it starts now. Not later. It starts right now wherever you are. So whatever you’re experiencing in your life right now you want to be a hero in the small things. Don’t wait for the big things to come along. God’s preparing you for the big things. You don’t have to be afraid of the big things because you’ll be ready for them at that point. Right now in the small things God wants us to be able to make a difference.

I know a lot of young people today say that. “I want to make a difference in my life.” I’m not sure what that means, but that’s what they want to do. They want to make a difference in life. I would suggest that the difference is made now in the small things. It starts now. You want to drive a car? Great. It starts with unloading the dishwasher without being asked. You want to drive a car? Great. It starts by pushing the lawn mower. It’s built in the small things. You want to be able to move toward something bigger then you’re going to start in the small things.

I often will tell a young person who’s just starting out, go work at McDonald’s. McDonald’s is a great place to work because you work with the annoying public, you work with other annoying people, you have to work hard. What a great way to work off some of those rough edges that we have. Go work at McDonald’s. It’s a great place to work. Because in the midst of working at McDonald’s you start building the character necessary to work at some other great store like Chick-fil-A or something else. Who knows where you’re going to work, but God builds the character in those small things.

God wants to prepare us all to be heroes and it starts in those small things in our lives. I trust that God will use you right now where you are in the small things in your life to do something powerful. Where is that for you? God wants to do good things in our lives. I trust that God will use that in your life as He is in mine. I need to be a hero in the small things and then trust God to open the doors for bigger things as well.

Would you stand with me? Let’s pray together.

[PRAYER] Lord, I pray for the student that may be involved in mundane tasks that don’t seem worthwhile for the long term. That you’d help that student to be a hero and to view that task as an opportunity you’ve provided. I pray for the mom who may be staying at home with kids who might rather be out in the workforce, that you’d give that mom an ability to view the current situation as an opportunity to become a hero. I pray for those men and women that are in jobs right now that aren’t the most satisfying jobs that you’d provide them with the opportunity to excel where they are. Lord, we do ask you for big things. We know that with you all things are

possible. We ask you to enlarge our borders and we ask you to help us to have the character to withstand the challenges at these new points in our lives. Lord, speak to each one of us about how we might be able to be more effective in our roles and our relationships in life. Teach us what it means to take Jesus home and to follow you every day of our lives. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.