HUDSON'S HOPE CHAPEL

The God Who Sees

September 13, 2026 · Series: After God's Own Heart · Luke Hughes-Bunger

Main Passage: 1 Samuel 16:1-13 (ESV)

Big Idea: God's choice is not always our choice. He knows more than we can see, prepares and equips His servant, and leads us to Jesus, the faithful King who knows and forgives.

Introduction - The Man Before the Shield

Before Steve Rogers becomes Captain America, his physical weakness keeps him from military service. The surprising choice of Steve for the super-soldier programme raises a question: what kind of person should receive that strength? Character matters in ways that outward measurements cannot fully reveal.

We also form quick opinions about people. Appearance, confidence, experience, and shared interests can help us feel that we understand someone. But we can notice these things and still know very little about the person.

This week, Samuel faces that limit. God sends him to Jesse's household in Bethlehem to anoint a king. Samuel knows where to go, but he does not yet know which son God has chosen. His first impression seems convincing. God's word corrects it.

As we follow David's life, we are learning to trust the God who knows the whole person and remains faithful beyond our understanding.

Beyond the Disappointment

1 Samuel 16:1-5

Samuel begins this chapter grieving Saul. He has anointed Saul, brought God's word to him, and confronted his disobedience. He understands God's judgment, but understanding does not remove his sorrow.

We may recognize that pain when someone we trust fails us. Their words or care have mattered to us. Then something comes to light, and we wonder whether we ever really knew them. This can happen with a leader, a friend, or a member of our family. Knowing why something is wrong does not immediately heal the wound it causes.

God addresses Samuel's grief and calls him forward. He tells Samuel to take oil to Jesse's household because He has provided a king among Jesse's sons. Saul's failure has real consequences, but it has not stopped God's purpose.

Samuel still fears Saul's response. God gives him a genuine sacrifice to offer, a household to visit, and further guidance to follow. Samuel does not receive a complete account of what will happen. He receives enough direction to obey the next command.

For us, trusting God does not require pretending that disappointment is small. We may need care, wise boundaries, and time to grieve. A person's failure does not mean that God's faithfulness has failed with them. We can seek His help for the next faithful step without knowing the whole future.

Study Note: What Samuel Knows

Samuel has received a specific commission from God. His journey does not teach that every strong feeling is a divine instruction. We seek direction through Scripture, prayer, wise counsel, and responsible decisions. Trust can involve taking action, asking for help, or keeping a necessary boundary.

The sacrifice is a real part of Samuel's visit. The royal appointment is a further purpose he does not announce to Saul. The passage gives no general permission to invent falsehoods to protect a ministry.

The Man We Would Choose

1 Samuel 16:6-10

When Samuel sees Eliab, Jesse's eldest son, he thinks he has found the king. Eliab's appearance and height seem right. But God tells Samuel that this is not the man He has chosen.

Saul has already shown that impressive stature cannot guarantee obedience. God explains that human beings look at outward appearance while He looks at the heart (verse 7).

The person receiving this correction is an experienced prophet. Samuel's years of service do not give him complete knowledge of another person. His example should encourage patience with others and humility about our own conclusions.

We can confuse what feels familiar with what is faithful. Someone shares our interests, sounds confident, or knows how church works, and we quickly trust them. Someone else struggles to speak, has a difficult background, or seems unfamiliar with our customs, and we hold back.

This can shape ordinary choices as well as important ones. At a meal, we may choose the easy conversation while passing over someone we have never taken time to know. Giving another person our attention is one way to question those habits. We can sit beside them, ask a thoughtful question, and listen without hurrying their answer.

When choosing leaders or assigning responsibility, outward confidence is not enough. We should consider how someone receives correction, whether they keep promises, and how they treat people who cannot help them advance. God values character, skill, and ability. Our first impression cannot fully measure those things.

Study Note: What Is the Heart?

In Scripture, the heart includes our thoughts, desires, trust, and choices. It is more than our feelings. What we love inwardly affects how we live outwardly.

That makes the words "God knows my heart" both comforting and searching. God understands a person whom others misjudge. He also knows when we use good intentions to avoid admitting harm. Sincere feelings cannot make dishonesty or cruelty faithful.

Humility does not mean ignoring evidence. We should still listen carefully when someone reports harm, consider observable conduct, and protect vulnerable people. God knowing more than we do is a reason for careful judgment, not careless trust.

Samuel accepts God's correction. As Jesse presents more sons, Samuel keeps listening. He allows the Lord's word to change his conclusion. That willingness to be corrected is itself an important part of faithfulness.

The Shepherd God Knows

1 Samuel 16:11-13; Psalm 78:70-72

After seven sons have been presented, Samuel asks whether there are any others. Jesse's youngest son is caring for sheep. Samuel sends for him, and David arrives.

The passage describes David as handsome. This prevents us from making a new rule that outwardly impressive people must be poor choices. God asks Samuel to trust His knowledge, rather than simply reverse his preferences.

David's work with sheep is also significant. Psalm 78 later connects his care of sheep with his care of Israel. It describes both integrity of heart and skill in leadership. God has been shaping a servant through real responsibilities.

David does not need to understand his future kingship for his present work to matter. Ordinary duties can become places where God forms patience, courage, attention, and dependable habits.

Our responsibilities may feel small or repetitive. We answer a question patiently, do a job honestly, keep an inconvenient promise, or care for someone whose needs continue tomorrow. These acts have value before anyone praises them. Their worth does not depend on receiving a larger role later.

This does not forbid ambition, applying for an opportunity, or explaining what we can offer. It frees us from treating recognition as the final measure of our lives. We can serve well and trust God with the outcome.

Samuel anoints David with oil before his brothers. The Spirit of the Lord comes upon him. God appoints him and supplies His presence and power for the task. David's experience and abilities matter, but he will still need to depend upon God.

Study Note: What the Story Leaves Unsaid

The passage tells us David is absent and tending sheep. It does not explain Jesse's motives, give David's exact age, or describe David's thoughts when he is summoned. We can recognize his being overlooked at this gathering without inventing an account of rejection or mistreatment throughout his childhood.

Anointing marks David's appointment as king; it does not immediately place him on the throne. The coming weeks include service, danger, and waiting. Nor does the Spirit's presence approve everything David later does. God will expose his sin and hold him accountable.

God is providing a king for His people. This is larger than David receiving personal recognition, and it is not a promise that every overlooked person will become prominent.

Known by the King

Isaiah 11:1-5; Luke 3:21-22; Acts 10:38-43

David will serve God's purpose, but he will also need forgiveness. God's people need a King whose faithfulness does not fail.

Isaiah describes a coming ruler from Jesse's family. God's Spirit rests upon Him, and His judgment reaches beyond outward evidence. He rules with righteousness. These themes lead us from David's anointing toward Jesus, the promised Son of David.

At Jesus' baptism, the Spirit descends upon Him and the Father declares His delight in His Son. Jesus knows the people He comes to save. He is not deceived by an impressive appearance or limited by another person's dismissive judgment.

Being fully known can feel frightening as well as comforting. We have sins we would rather hide. But the King who knows us is also the Saviour who offers forgiveness.

Peter brings these truths together in Acts 10. He speaks of Jesus' anointing, works of mercy, death, and resurrection. He then announces forgiveness through Jesus' name for everyone who believes in Him.

Jesus bears the judgment sinners deserve and rises from death. His mercy does not depend on our keeping some part of ourselves hidden. We can bring Him the truth because He has already dealt with our need at the cross.

David's calling and our salvation are not identical. We are invited to trust the greater King David points toward. Our acceptance comes through Christ, whose Spirit begins changing our desires and teaching us faithful obedience.

Living the Message

If you are exploring faith, you do not need to make yourself impressive before coming to Jesus. Trust the crucified and risen King for forgiveness. Bring Him the heart you actually have and ask Him to change what you love.

If you belong to Christ, your acceptance does not depend on winning every person's approval. You can admit a mistake, welcome correction, or let someone else receive attention. You can do necessary work that nobody applauds.

This week, give someone a hearing after your first impression. Bring a wounded hope to God and seek the support you need. Choose one ordinary responsibility to carry out faithfully, even if nobody notices.

These are responses to God's grace, not ways to earn His welcome. Samuel learns to receive correction. David must depend on God's provision. We are called to trust Jesus and take the next faithful step under His care.

Discussion Guide Questions

1. What can outward appearance tell us about someone? What can it leave hidden?
2. Why is Samuel still grieving even though he understands God's rejection of Saul?
3. What does God's instruction in verses 1-3 show about His continuing purpose?
4. Why is it important that Samuel himself needs the correction in verse 7?
5. Where might we confuse familiarity with faithfulness? How could that affect our welcome of others?
6. What does the Bible mean by the heart? Why can good intentions never excuse harmful conduct?
7. What does David's appearance in verse 12 prevent us from concluding?
8. How does Psalm 78:70-72 help us understand David's preparation? Why does ordinary service matter even without promotion?
9. What does David receive at his anointing, and what challenges still lie ahead?
10. How do Isaiah 11 and Acts 10 lead us toward Jesus? Why do we need forgiveness as well as truthful knowledge?
11. What difference does acceptance in Christ make to our need for approval?
12. What is one faithful step you can take this week in your judgments, relationships, or responsibilities?