

"CHOSEN" Series - #1

by Pastor Tim Dodson

at JF Believers church

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Back in chapter 13 of 1 Samuel (13:14), scripture records these prophetic words concerning one young man by the name of David... *"But now your kingdom shall not continue. The LORD has sought for Himself a man after His own heart, and the LORD has commanded him to be commander over His people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you."*



Like so much of scripture, those words and the principle behind them have echoed on down through the halls of history...repeated again and again in the ministry and the pursuit of the Kingdom of God. I have no doubt that God is *still* looking for that man. Still seeking after a man who is *'after the heart of God.'* Matthew 22:14 reminds us that *"...many are called, but few are chosen."* Many have been afforded the incredible opportunity to "play ball" with the majors...to "change the world" but have failed to show up for the game, or have squandered the opportunity and the calling of God through worldly distractions, self-centered motivations and, like King Saul, power grabs and ignoring the voice of the director.

The criteria for such a God selection is astonishingly humble. However, God's choosing defies human reasoning! 1Corinthians 1:27 tells us bluntly that *"...God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty."* David would be an unlikely choice, just as I am to stand in this pulpit and as many of you are in the rolls that God has allowed you to play! I passionately believe that it is the roll of the church to not merely *show* you the door to life, but to walk you through it and equip you for the challenges of living it out.

I also believe that is to be the calling of **all** churches, but I promise you that it is the calling of this one! To obey...to really obey that mandate, is expensive. It would be easier to "go along" with the flow...with the religious multitude who have dozed off as they waited for the bridegroom and when the big day finally came, they were found to be 'un-ready'...asleep at the wheel! God chose us before the foundations of the earth were laid. He never failed us. But the other side...*our side*, went unfulfilled and unanswered. Perhaps out of fear. Perhaps out of a desire for the things of this world or a different life than He was calling us to. But the end result was the same; *the train left the station without us.*

Yet God owns the cattle on a thousand hills (Ps 50:10) and has so many others in which to call. He is not hampered or waylaid by our refusal. Because all such ministry is **all** Him, it matters little that one possesses talent or natural abilities...education and training. No one is so special! But rather God **makes** him or her special, through His presence with and in the individual. God chooses. God calls. God equips. God provides. God directs. And God empowers. Ours is just to be obedient. Ours is to trust and obey, and move in the light of His presence, like the children of Israel in the wilderness.

How do we know? How do we know who is thus and who is not? The light of the gospel illuminates the field of play and those on that field. The gospel separates the wheat from the chaff...the authentic from the pseudo, the truth from the lie. The gospel calls us to obey. The gospel tells us that Jesus did it all and does it all. And like Saul, when we attempt to alter course...to "intervene" in the cosmic plan He has for our lives, God simply reaches into his vast and seemingly endless pocket and pulls out another candidate...another potential servant who with Him gets a chance to change the world! I have no doubt that if David had rejected thus, God would have simply moved on to number three, and we would be simply reading today about a different man with a different name.

We discover those so called over time by their conduct and conversation. Whether they love like the world (if they love at all!) or whether they love like Jesus. For the two are very different! Involved in all of this passage was a spirit-filled mediator...another so called by God to a different task than to be king, but...as so many of us have experienced, would ultimately, in his own right, play a pivotal roll in the course of kingdom history.

Samuel would obediently go to where God directed, but ironically he seemed quite ready to essentially choose the same man as Saul once again, by using the same human criteria! Samuel was ready to let his eyes and human reason filter the candidate. Eliab had the appearance of a winner, but God was operating with a whole other set of criteria. It is that criteria that brought me to this pulpit and position. So Samuel had to be schooled once again. I wish I could say that men actual learn from experience, but history would argue that point! The reality is, if we learn at all, it is seldom on the second attempt! Some of us travel most of our lifetimes and are essentially still sitting at the gate...

God told Samuel in 16, verse 7; *"But the LORD said to Samuel, 'Don't judge by his appearance or height, for I have rejected him. The LORD doesn't see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.'"* Certainly over the years of my life I have seen religious 'stars' of this world either crash and burn or sometimes fail to launch; the "sure bet" that bit the dust. The "champion" who was shelved. It's easy to fall into the trap that world espouses...the idea that we can be so educated and 'spit-polished' to candidate for such a service. Again, perhaps in the denominational world of men and religion, but not in the bizzaro-world of true kingdom servanthood!

God was (and is) never in the business of spiritual rehab. He wasn't in this to 'fix you up.' He was in this to make a new person, with a new life, and a supernatural new calling on his or her life. That's the gospel. I'm not saying that biblical education has no merit, but how often we think that such will make us into what we fail to be without it! We get the idea that seminary will make us usable to God, and frankly more successful in doing so ...which is generally our greatest motivation! Earthly success by a human scale. What such a diploma does most of the time is merely "puff us up" as 1 Corinthians 8:1 so describes.

There is a seemingly continual inability to grasp one's mortality as well as the precious little time we have to spend here! Instead of "seizing the day" we instead squander the time and opportunities that God puts before us. Thinking that there will always be a tomorrow! When the truth has been proven untold millions of times, in that we all die, and some times way before we think appropriate!

Nowhere in scripture sets the disciple apart from and thus creates a special class just called "Christians" that get a pass from the testing and the calling that comes with new birth. All of us...if we are reborn in Christ, are called to the same surrender, service, and sacrifice. What made David unique...if there was anything tangible, was not the physical characteristics, the educational diplomas or the training in kingly pursuits. It was rather that one "x-factor" of absolute abandonment to the promises of God. There would be some crazy stories to tell! Stories of giants and people chasing him and dances of victory against the odds. Stories that would be told down through history. Stories of adventure and audacious bravery. And stories yes of moral failings and powerful depression...and yet God records that David was ...through it all...a "*man after my own heart.*"

I think that sometimes we imagine that like 'lightning from heaven' this event was birthed that day through some supernatural lottery. That there was no history to draw from or heart revealed in which to judge. History would reject such a premise. While we will fail to 'train' our way into the service of God, we *can* and *do* indeed **prepare!** David's heart was *already* recognized by God. There had to be interaction and communication happening between them long before word came down to Samuel to 'give the kid the keys.'

I often have been pitched the idea concerning ones desire to participate in the School of Ministry here, with the premise that once they 'show up for school' they will kick it into gear and put God first. But that is not how it works. Not in the school of ministry and not in the ministry of the Kingdom! God tells us clearly that those that have been faithful in the small things will be entrusted with the big stuff. (Luke 16:10) Never can I or this church, or Dallas seminary for that matter, make you into a servant of God if that is not your predisposition and hearts passion.

We merely recognize the anointing and one's obedience to such. I believe such is very much the same with the calling of Christ! The bottom line is that this chapter and this event is certainly not "David's calling moment!" This was not the beginning of His relationship with God. Oh no...somewhere in the days behind him David had come to know God and what God wanted of Him. I doubt if he grasped the level of position he would be granted, but I am willing to bet that it didn't matter. He wasn't in this for an earthly crown but rather a heavenly one. He would prove that repeatedly in the years to follow this event.

When we read the psalms that would be yet written by an older and wiser David, we still hear the voice of contrition and humility. The angst of need and dependency on God, especially when things didn't make sense at all. His psalms would speak of his weaknesses and fleshly tendencies, but always in the light of repentance and the poured out offering of his life. Rarely are we so willing to be as introspective when it comes to our own lives. Nobody wants to look down into that pit.

Sadly in light of such, many of us fail to recognize our true state and that we potentially have never really been reborn. David in Psalms 139:23-24 says bravely "*Search me O God...and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*" Because we fail to be so passionate and yes "brave," we can easily live out our lives in a religious delusion and an inside premise that "no news is good news." But that "bitter pill" can literally "save our lives" if we are willing to really look.

According to verse 13, the "spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward." David had apparently been obedient and faithful. He had apparently lived out his confessed love for God. And now God stepped up and filled him with his very presence and the power and attributes that come with such an indwelling. God would *respond* to David as surely as David had responded to God. God was not taking a position of submission but rather acknowledging the heart of David. He did so as surely as He does today. God knows a good thing when He see it. He longs to draw you near to Him...as near as you are willing to come, and He desires to show you things greater than your eyes have seen, greater than your ears have ever heard, and greater than anything that has entered into your heart about Him or life in general. (1 Corinthians 2:9)

Or, you can play it "safe"...

There is a sadness I see in the lives and the faces of some who claim rebirth today. There is a bitterness and even anger that can only come from a disagreement with their life path. They want God, but they want the sweet taste of the world too, and in the process they generally loose both. David would quickly prove his "spiritual possession"...for as he enters into the presence of darkness in the person of Saul, there would be an near immediate and enduring 'rub' between them. For there can never be harmony between a spirit-filled believer and those lost in the darkness of their own emptiness. Anger and bitterness will prevail. And in the end, so will Satan...

This day was made manifest because David...a little shepherd living and operating in near obscurity was right where God wanted him to be. And God always knew exactly where he was. For God...even amongst the thousands of voices trying to get through, can always hear...*above all the rest*, the heart that is after Him.