

The Story: From Shepherd to King

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Preacher: Kent Dixon

[0 : 00] Well, good morning, Bramard Baptist. My name is Kent Dixon. It's my privilege to be the lead pastor here. This morning will be our final sermon in the series on the story before we take a break for our Christmas series, The Characters of Christmas.

And that series will take us through the next four weeks leading up to Christmas. We're starting the Characters of Christmas series next Sunday, so it's a great time to invite someone new to come with you to church.

Or better yet, bring someone with you. Bring someone that you know. Your pastor has a question for you this morning. Do you invite people or bring them with you to church?

If you do, that's great. Please keep doing that. And if you don't, why is that? I have a bit of a question and a challenge for you this morning.

If you don't invite people you know and care about to come to church, is it because you're embarrassed about the church, your church, or the people in your church?

[1 : 14] Is it because you're perhaps embarrassed about your faith or your belief in God in a world where that's not too popular right now? Is it because you feel perhaps that you're not good at it or that the idea of that takes you too far out of your comfort zone?

Or maybe it's that hesitation. Does that hesitation somehow point to something else that God is trying to draw your attention to? Something that he's saying, wait a minute.

I need you to take a closer look at this. Could it be that God wants to use you to introduce you to someone specific who's already a part of your life?

But that you're not asking God specifically to reveal to you who that is? I really want you to consider that possibility this morning.

I'm not all that good at math, I'll be honest, but something has been on my heart lately and it turns out that it's on the hearts of many of my friends who are pastors as well. If each person in our church invited just one other person to come to our church, what would happen?

[2 : 34] Our church would double. More people would hear about the amazing love and forgiveness of God.

More people would find a community where they're welcomed and accepted. More people would find the answers to some of life's questions that have been eluding them. And God's work in this place would experience new growth.

So what are you afraid of? The worst thing that can happen is someone will say, no.

I think your relationship, your friendship with that person will survive. So you really have nothing to lose. And someone you care about deeply could potentially have everything to gain.

So, what are you afraid of? The worst thing that can happen is someone will say no. Ultimately, it's not the most modern and user-friendly website.

[3 : 50] Convenience, service times, and lengths. A great location. And here at our church, we are blessed indeed with a great location. It's not scripturally grounded preaching and teaching, although that's a big part of it.

It's not a welcoming and inviting atmosphere. All of those things help in inviting people to church and making them feel welcome. But they make a difference.

But just as our faith is about a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and worshiping the God of the universe, it's existing personal relationships that each of you have with others and you inviting them to come with you to your church that have the greatest impact.

So I encourage you to invite people. Bring people to church with you and keep inviting. Because I've said before, it's through a personal relationship that you have with someone else already that they can discover a personal relationship with God.

I want to start this morning with a story. I'm not a golfer, so bear with me. In fact, I really hate golf. I know it doesn't make me much of a Scotsman, but there you have it.

[5 : 20] So we're going to start with a story. Three golfers got struck by lightning and ended up at the pearly gates of heaven. They asked St. Peter if there was golf in heaven and he assured them that there was incredible golf in heaven.

But there was just one rule. Don't hit a duck. As they played, not surprisingly, one of the guys hit a duck.

St. Peter approached, ladies bear with me, approached with a not so gorgeous woman, homely in fact, and said to the man, you're the one who hit a duck.

St. Peter handcuffed the homely woman to the man and off they went to be like that for eternity. The two others continued to play and eventually another one hit a duck.

Sure enough, St. Peter approached with another un-gorgeous woman and handcuffed her to the one who hit the duck. And they were that way for all eternity.

[6 : 30] So the last guy continued to play against the odds. One day, St. Peter approached him with a knockdown, gorgeous woman and handcuffed this stunning beauty to the guy.

Elated, the last golfer said, I don't know what I did to deserve this. The gorgeous woman said, I hit a duck.

This is a funny story that emphasizes a sad truth. Our world judges by externals, by how we look on the outside.

And as we've talked about before, God does not judge based on the external. God doesn't judge based on outside appearance or what can be seen as superficial qualities.

And God also wants us, as his people, to resist judging based on external qualities and appearance. You've likely heard the expression, never judge a book by its cover.

[7 : 40] I often find that funny because why do we have dust jackets then? Why do we have attractive author pictures and enticing blurbs from books on the back of the book?

But that expression, never judge a book by its cover. I believe it was God who first said that. And we'll see this morning, this truth played out as we continue to work through the story and we come to the anointing of David as Israel's king and our sermon titled From Shepherd to King.

So how does a young man named David wind up being chosen by God as the king who will rule over his people? Do you remember how we learned last week that God had rejected Saul as king over Israel?

Saul had acted selfishly and defied God's command to wipe out the Amalekites. And so God repaid his disobedience by removing him as king.

Can you imagine what that would have been like for a prideful man like Saul? He was still technically king and yet God had already moved on.

[9 : 03] God sends Samuel to a man named Jesse in Bethlehem. And yes, it's that Bethlehem. And the parade of Jesse's son begins.

Young men who are to be considered as candidates for king. Eliab, Abinadab, Shammah. Samuel is convinced each time that God must have chosen one of these young men.

But God passes each one by. As I mentioned last week, scholars suggest that Saul was likely tall and handsome.

He was probably an impressive looking man. Samuel may have been trying to find someone who looked like Saul, was very Saul-like in his appearance, to be Israel's next king.

But God warned him against judging by appearance alone. The Bible says in 1 Samuel 16, verse 7, The Lord does not look at the things man looks at.

[10 : 15] Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart. When people judge by outward appearance, they may overlook individuals of exceptional character who lack the particular physical qualities that society currently admires.

A person's outward appearance doesn't reveal what they are really like or what their true value is. But fortunately, God judges by faith and character, not appearances.

And because only God can see on the inside, only He can accurately judge people. Most people spend hours each week maintaining their outward appearance.

And as you can tell by me, I don't spend that much time. But seriously, in reality, what we should be spending our time on is developing our inner character.

Because while everyone can see your face, only you and God know what your heart really looks like. what you are like inside, what you deeply value.

[11 : 39] God knew the qualities He wanted for the King of Israel, and He didn't see those qualities in any of Jesse's sons, except one.

Jesse sends for his youngest, David, who is faithfully tending the sheep. God saw in David the potential of a king not based on his age, or his looks, or his height.

He was a very young man. None of that was a factor in God's choice. And the Bible says of David in Psalm 78, 70 to 72, He chose David as his servant and took him from the sheep pens.

From tending the sheep, he brought him to be the shepherd of his people, Jacob of Israel, his inheritance. And David shepherded them with integrity of heart, with skillful hands, he led them. To be clear, Samuel didn't anoint David as God's chosen king in a big public ceremony. This was likely done in private for the time being.

[12 : 57] Maybe just Samuel and David and one or two others. Because technically, Saul would still have remained king, but largely by title only.

So why David of all people? Because David exhibited the qualities God asks of all of us, even to this day.

David was content doing what he had been asked to do, caring for his family's flock. And I think we may think of being a shepherd as rather dull, boring job.

But it would have been a huge responsibility. The shepherd would have had to be constantly vigilant, watching not over just the entire flock, but each individual sheep as well. caring for individual needs, and then even fighting off predators like lions or bears or wolves, if necessary.

[14 : 00] David would have rescued the sheep and protected them from danger. But most importantly, we learned very quickly that David was a man after God's own heart.

He loved God and sought to follow him. So was David the natural choice or even the remotely logical choice based on human standards?

Jesse, David's father, didn't even think to include him when Samuel came looking for a potential king. When the Israelite and Philistine armies faced one another across the valley of Elah, and David came to watch the battle, his oldest brother scolded him for leaving the sheep.

Kid, what are you doing here? The adults are talking. Go and do what you're supposed to be doing. And even King Saul saw David as just a little boy and certainly not kingly material.

And as David stood against Goliath, a giant and an intimidating Philistine warrior who terrified the seasoned Israelite soldiers that quivered in their armor, Goliath called David a stick and a dog.

[15 : 21] I find it fascinating that from 1 Samuel 19 to 29, it's quite a stretch. I encourage you to read it on your own. We read of how Saul's son Jonathan befriends David right from the beginning.

Jonathan recognizes kingly qualities in him. Saul, David's rival, Saul, David's king, his own son recognizes true kingly qualities in him.

And ironically, it's through the negative actions and behavior of Saul as king. That David is actually receiving the best possible education in how not to lead, how not to rule, how not to be king.

God, as he so often does throughout scripture and in our own lives, is using hardships and trials to shape someone into who he wants them to be.

Saul, who is completely hostile towards David and actually wants his rival dead, is God's tool to train David in godly, kingly character.

[16 : 40] And while Saul pursues David and forces him to live as a fugitive, he must depend on God for guidance and help. And it's actually not until 14 years have passed that David is ready to represent God and God's character as he is ultimately inaugurated as king over Israel.

And we'll learn more about David's journey as our series in the story picks up again on December 29th. There are a few concepts that I want to specifically highlight for us from the story of David's younger years that can apply to our own lives.

First, David as king points to the coming future king who will rule over not just the people of Israel, but over all people as the Messiah, Jesus.

You may have considered before that David was part of the genealogy of Jesus, but did you realize that they were from both the same tribe, Judah, and the same city, Bethlehem?

But those are not the only parallels to Jesus that we have seen in the story so far. Jesus is the Passover lamb, a concept that we first explored in Exodus.

[18 : 12] Jesus is the ultimate deliverer, a concept we explored as we looked at the book of Judges.

And when Howard explored the book of Ruth for us a few weeks ago, he talked about the concept of a kinsman redeemer. And my friends, Jesus is our ultimate redeemer.

It's fitting that we consider some of these parallels to Jesus, particularly as we prepare for the Christmas season and launch into our Christmas series next week.

my hope for you is that you have someone in your life who can be your Jonathan. A person who sees you as Jonathan saw David, the way God sees you.

A person who is there to cheer you on, to celebrate with you during times that are good and who has your back during times of hardship or challenge.

[19 : 29] A person who sees you with great potential to be what God wants you to be. just as David and Jesus were underestimated by others, judged on their actions, their looks, their behavior, their external qualities, we can also expect to be underestimated by others too.

And maybe, if you're like me, you may even have a tendency to underestimate yourself. Just as David and Jesus went through the seasons of testing, we can also expect that God will test us as well.

So that we can develop character and integrity to represent God to our world. And as you've listened to this sermon this morning, do you identify with the story of David?

Well, it's unlikely that any of us will ever stand across a battlefield against a nine-foot-tall giant, that's what scholars suggest the height of Goliath was, nine feet, with a huge spear and massive armor.

It's quite likely that we will face other obstacles in our lives. Giants of our own that threaten to take us down to take us down. They may seem completely overwhelming or may land us in a set of circumstances for which we were totally unprepared or we are terrified to face.

[21 : 19] What are the giants that you've either faced and overcome through God's grace or that you're currently facing in your life?

Do you identify with David's confidence and victory on the battlefield, staring down something that seemed to be too much for you to handle until you ask God to step into it and fight for you?

And he did. Or do you maybe identify more with the Israelites right now as they looked across that battlefield and saw something fierce, threatening, unbeatable, staring them down?

Are you facing health concerns? Are you facing provision concerns, challenges with finances or employment?

I want to reassure you this morning, my friends, that God is aware of your giants. God will give you the strength to stand up to them, to call them out, and to persevere in the middle of them.

[22 : 42] Stand firm and call upon God. And you just may find in one way or another. Those giants or their power over you will fall.

Let's pray. Let's pray.