

The Lord's Anointed

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[0 : 0 0] 2, 3, 8, and of course the central verse is verse 7, after Samuel of course sees Eliab and thinks surely the Lord's anointing is before him, but the Lord said to Samuel, do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him, for the Lord sees not as man sees, man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart. You know whenever we come to this great passage, and I looked at this before many years ago, I think it was one of some of the first sermons that I preached here was on the theme of the anointing of David as king, and you know it's very often a temptation to go straight to David, or maybe even to go to Samuel, the prophet in his anointing David as king. But you know the more that we look at this passage, the more we realise that we don't begin with David, we don't begin with Samuel, we begin with God the Lord. Because you notice even as you, if you scan through even these first 6, 7, 8 verses and beyond, you notice how frequently the name of the Lord is mentioned, whether it's directly you see the name Lord, or you see the pronoun form, he, you know, we see the centrality of God the Lord in this passage. And that's so important, because you know, whether we're looking here in the first instance, in the anointing of David as king, or you know even when we look beyond the anointing of David as king, when we look to the anointing, as we did last Sunday evening, the anointing of the son of David, the Lord Jesus, in his work in mission, we've got to look to God's hand, see God in the choosing of particular individuals, even within, you know, the scope of the work of the church, and the work that God gives his people to perform. Because it is always

God first. It's always God at the centre. It's God who takes the initiative, because God is sovereign. God is sovereign in all his purposes, and his purpose is for you, and his purpose is for the church. God does all things well, even guiding you, even directing you the work that he's given you to do for the sake of his name, for the sake of his kingdom. So, yes, we're continuing our thoughts in the life of Samuel, but we do so first and foremost in relation to Samuel's relationship to God. Because it's God who's led Samuel this far. It's God who's been with Samuel at every stage of Samuel's ministry, and God who will continue to lead Samuel in the choosing and the anointing of David as king. So, as we look at this particular episode, yes, in Samuel's life, we do it in worship.

This is a worship service. We do it to give thanks to God, to give glory to God for God's leading his people in all things, for God guiding our lives. And so, we are to give God the glory for every aspect of our lives that he's led us on this far, for his glory and his praise. And so, the three points I want to look at with you this morning, remember they are first and foremost in relation to God. Yes, we see Samuel rebuked, but remember Samuel rebuked by God. Samuel assured by God. Samuel guided by God.

God is the driving force, we might say. God is the initiator. God is the sovereign one, leading Samuel, leading his people to fulfill his purposes. And, you know, it's the same, bring this to yourselves, whether as an individual, whether ourselves as a church, and even looking at ourselves as a nation.

God is sovereign. God is Lord. And it's not for any of us to put, we might say, to put blinkers in our eyes and fail to see God's hand in every aspect of your life. So, firstly, Samuel rebuked, Samuel rebuked by God. Because we can work out historically that it's been over a decade since Saul was declared rejected by God for his disobedience. Saul had failed in his role as king over Israel. Saul couldn't be trusted to lead his people to be a faithful leader, a faithful ruler before God. And so another would take his place.

[5 : 13] Sometimes, a few weeks ago, we were looking at chapter 13. And again, we can work out that in all likelihood, this was something like 30 years before David's anointing, certainly before David was even born.

And Samuel had communicated to Saul that the Lord was seeking a man after his heart, after God's heart, to replace Saul as king because of Saul's disobedience. And then time moves on and we see a second bout of disobedience in Saul. And remember his failure to comply with God's command to totally destroy the Amalekites and everything belonging to them. And as we saw there at the end of chapter 15, God announced his rejection of Saul. And we read there at the very end of chapter 15 that Saul grieved over, Samuel grieved over Saul. Move on, start of chapter 16. What do you notice?

What do you notice immediately? We notice that Samuel's still grieving over Saul. This is a number of years later. This is Samuel the prophet who'd anointed Saul as king. Samuel who'd communicated with Saul the word of God. This is Samuel and he's still grieving, even though he knew that God had rejected Saul as king. And for that continuous grieving, God rebukes him. Verse 1, how long will you grieve over Saul since I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Samuel had to move on in his grief because if God had rejected Saul as king. Because if God had rejected Saul as king, then Samuel too must reject Saul as king. Because in Samuel still grieving, Samuel was actually rejecting God's will, we might say.

And you know, in that perpetual mourning, Samuel wasn't fully accepting God's sovereign purposes for the life of Israel.

God had already said there's someone better than Saul to succeed Saul as king. I mean, Samuel ought to rejoice that God's sovereign purposes were going to be carried out. But instead, Saul maintains the grief.

[7 : 33] Grief towards somebody who'd been clearly rejected by God. Grief that had no place in that prophet's life of faith. Grief. Just bring this to yourselves. You know, in your own response to God dealing with you. Maybe when a door shuts and that God shuts before you.

Maybe something that you'd hope for in your life that is contrary to the will of God. But it's not for you, not for me to maintain any kind of perpetual grief over the will of God in our lives.

Because if God has said no to your plans, if he said no to particular desires, if God has shut the door on those things that you'd intended, it's not for you or for me to question his providence.

But rejoice that God does all things well. I think I've quoted this before. I put it in the notice sheet. Martin Lloyd-Jones, when he declared of God's dealing with himself, I am profoundly grateful to God that he didn't grant me certain things for which I asked, and that he shut certain doors in my face.

I'm sure we can all, if we truly come before God with a heart that's true to him, that we can all echo, or we should all echo these words. When Samuel ought to have been reconciled to God's sovereign purpose, and God shutting the door and Saul as king.

[9 : 00] But notice it took Samuel some time to obey God. And Samuel does move on. You see that in the remainder of the chapter.

You see Samuel being assured at the middle of verse 1 down to verse 5. Just remember that Samuel hasn't been in touch with Saul since the day that Samuel told him that God had torn the kingdom away from him and given it to a neighbour who was better than him.

Now, as we said, that was some years before. Saul's hold on the kingdom slipping. And, you know, if Saul knew that Samuel was going to Bethlehem to find the man of God's choice as king, then as you can see in the passage, in all likelihood, Saul would kill Samuel.

I mean, you know, such was Saul's deranged frame of mind, and certainly this would be treason. Saul, no doubt, would kill Samuel, you know, presuming that Samuel was going to anoint someone else to be king.

So, in Saul's position, he's no longer God's choice for king. Saul doesn't need to know what Samuel's going to do there in Bethlehem.

[10 : 14] Saul doesn't have the right to know the details why Samuel's going to Bethlehem. All that Saul would need to know was that Samuel was taking a sacrifice with him, that Samuel could quite legitimately say, he's going to Bethlehem, he's going to offer what priests offer in sacrifice.

Saul is forfeited, is right, to know, you know, about Samuel's actions under God's leading. So, Samuel's assured by the word of God that he's going to take an animal for sacrifice.

He's going to call in this man Jesse of Bethlehem, and of course, by implications, Jesse's sons. There's going to be an act of worship, and in that act of worship, God is going to lead Samuel to anoint his chosen one.

Look at these verses. See the direction of God the Lord and Samuel being led to Bethlehem to carry out God's purposes.

God assuring Samuel that he'd be protected from Saul's malice. Samuel's going to be led to do what God would show him in anointing the one whom God had chosen.

[11 : 25] Samuel's got to comply with God's command and do so without any further hesitation. Remember when you're called to do what might appear, called by God to do what might appear difficult.

Maybe some task that you think is so fraught with, I don't know, difficulty, danger even. Maybe with the consequence of some kind of personal attack or some distressing circumstance.

Remember that God, who's been with you thus far, promises to continue to be with you in his perfect blessing and perfect leading. I mean, Samuel knew that he must go to Bethlehem, that he must go to one particular family.

Now, he didn't know who he was going to anoint in that family, but he went in faith. He went believing that God's promise to be with him would be, it was a true promise.

And for you who face the unknown, maybe who are struggling even at this moment with some kind of doubt or fear when God is calling you to a particular role, a particular task, when he's sending you in his wisdom, you be assured that he does all things well.

[12 : 37] You're not abandoned by the Lord God Almighty. So trust in his leading. Trust in his grace. Trust in his assured presence with you.

And be encouraged as you go forward in faith, as you trust in his promises for his glory and for your sake. And so we see Samuel trusting in God as Samuel goes to Bethlehem.

You see Samuel's, you might see, calm acceptance of God's will being there in Bethlehem. But you see there when the elders come out to meet them, the elders of the town, they're not calm.

They're not at peace. They're trembling. And no doubt they're afraid of the consequences for themselves. You know, they appear to be welcoming Samuel, whom Saul had been estranged from.

But, well, they're still trembling. Samuel himself is at peace. He's at peace with God because God, he knows that God has led him thus far. Samuel's going to continue with the mission that God has given him because he knows that God is in control.

[13 : 45] Even though he doesn't fully know what's about to transpire in the anointing of the next king of Israel. And, you know, when you remember that Samuel's been called to do something grand, you know, something so integral to the well-being of Israel.

This is something that's going to be so utterly nation-changing. This is the anointing of a king to succeed Saul. And Samuel's peace, where does it come from?

It comes from God's Word. It comes from God's Word that has assured Samuel that he's with him. I pray that you'll know that peace from the Word of God that promises his peace with you.

That peace that comes from, yes, from a faith that trusts in God for everything, for all things. Whether you're asked to do something on a grand scale for the Lord, whether it's some little detail in the work of the kingdom, well, do it with that peace of God guarding your heart, knowing he's with you, he's with you now, he's with you in all things.

And, yes, we've said it many times, and we know there, in many ways, there are simple truths. And yet, there are powerful truths, there are powerful reminders that our God, the God of all grace, the God of all power, that he's willing to be involved in the affairs of man, even in your circumstances, for his glory and for the furtherance of his kingdom.

[15 : 15] So, Samuel, assure this, I pray, that you are assured of God's presence with you in all things and at all times. But then we come, in many ways, to, as we say, to the centrality of the passage here, being Samuel guided, guided by God.

You see, in verse 6 to 13, the main thrust of the story, we might say, Samuel being led to anoint the one whom, in human eyes, seemed the most insignificant.

But in God's eyes, it was the right choice for a king. I'm sure you know the well-known Latin phrase that was ascribed to Julius Caesar after his victory in a battle that he fought.

When was it? 47 BC? Veni vidi vici. I came, I saw, I conquered. And, you know, that phrase that's used nowadays to speak of a swift victory.

And, you know, for Samuel there, when he saw the sons of Jesse appear before him, particularly the one that caught his eye, Eliab, Samuel might have thought, well, here's a swift victory.

[16 : 20] Here's a swift settlement of the whole matter of anointing a new king. I came, I saw, I, well, not I conquered, but I anointed. You see, in verse 6, you see, I came.

They came. You know, Jesse and his sons come to the sacrifice. Samuel saw. Samuel saw. Oh, this fine, strong, tall man. And Samuel thought, yep, he's the anointed one.

He's the appointed one. This is the one. You know, you can just read his mind. To Samuel's eyes, he fits the bill for a king to lead.

But then, you know, pause for a moment. Samuel had never met Eliab. He knew nothing of his spiritual life. He was basing his thoughts on external circumstances.

Yes, of course, alongside the word that God had given him that amongst Jesse's sons was going to be one who'd be the anointed, appointed king. Samuel had jumped to a conclusion based on the external experience and appearance, rather, of Eliab.

[17 : 24] Samuel had assumed God's word leading to this man. But Samuel had used a superficial assessment of appearance.

And you think that, you know, that's going to support God's promise of a king from Jesse's family. And notice, for that superficiality, God rebukes Samuel again.

And these words that have resonated through the centuries don't look on his appearance or on the height of his stature because I've rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees. Man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.

You know these words well. The next king of Israel is going to be chosen not according to his external equalities, but to the internal integrity of his heart, his righteousness, his uprightness, his holiness, his integrity.

Now, remember this. Remember. The choice for office, the choice for work in God's kingdom, the choice, don't confuse it with God's, as if we're choosing for salvation.

[18 : 36] No one is chosen by God in salvation because of any merit in himself. It's not that God sees, you know, that God somehow sees a person meriting salvation by some kind of moral quality in that person.

Of course not. Because we all deserve God's punishment. We all deserve his wrath and curse. The seeing of God into the heart of man who'd be king, in this case, concerns, of course, the qualities that would make this new king, this person, suitable to lead Israel.

Now, there are many applications, of course, from this great passage. But remember, we begin with God, the Lord. And ask yourself this.

What does God see in your heart? What does he see that no one else sees? Now, outwardly, we might appear models of Christian maturity or respectability.

People who look up to you. You might, you know, portray all that in the externals of your life. Maybe in the words that you speak, in public anyway. Maybe the actions you perform in public.

[19 : 49] Maybe the things you write that you communicate, whether in, I don't know, in social media, or books, blogs, whatever. But what truly lies within your heart that they all see and God observes?

What does God see that the public doesn't see when the public face is hidden? When we're behind closed doors? What does God see that truly is ourselves in what we are?

What we truly are that so often betrays an outward respectability? What does God see in our hearts that might whatever it be, like our lusts, our jealousies?

Maybe even our contemptuous attitude against a fellow believer? Maybe our lack of love towards a fellow believer? You know, if God were to project onto the walls of this room all your thoughts, all my thoughts, all your intentions, all your attitudes of heart, all your motives, would you be comfortable?

Would I be comfortable with that? Of course not. Wouldn't you utterly, as I would be utterly ashamed of my heart, your heart, that God were to project what's within our hearts for all to see?

[21 : 10] But He knows. And surely it's then for you and for me to come before God, to come before the God who sees, the God who knows, and yes, to confess before Him the sins of our hearts and to do so with the words of Scripture.

Psalms 139. Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Well, for Samuel there, and has been sent by God to anoint one of Jesse's sons, one whose heart was right with God. You know, you look at the story, the narrative, it's a kind of mixture of humor and perplexity.

I mean, there's Jesse the father, he singles out each one of his sons to appear before Samuel, to do it face to face, only for Samuel on each of these seven occasions to tell Jesse, no, he's not the one.

And then, you know, in doing that, you can sense Samuel's perplexity. I mean, after all, God's informed him that one of Jesse's sons is going to be his choice for king. Seven sons have passed by, and the Lord hasn't chosen any of them.

[22 : 22] And Samuel might think, it's confused. Are all your sons here? I mean, God's promised that one of Jesse's sons is going to be king, but where is he? And then, you know, the thought might have been, have I misheard God?

How's the promise going to be fulfilled if not one of these sons is chosen as king? And maybe in your own life you've had times of perplexity when God has appeared to delay a promise.

And all the time he's actually given you times of waiting to strengthen your faith, to wait in him the more in faith. Maybe you've been called to a particular work, a particular leading, and there appears some obstacle, some delay in the implementation of that calling.

You might ask, well, why has God led me thus far, only to reach a dead end? I remember one minister of probably the biggest church in the Highlands, maybe even one of the biggest churches in Scotland, telling me that when he started out in ministry he was wondering why God had sent him to this particular place.

There appeared so little fruit to his ministry. He even wondered if he'd made a mistake. At one point he even thought of throwing the towel and giving up. And look at that congregation today.

[23 : 46] It's numbered in its many, many hundreds. It's a beacon in the north. But we wait on God and he'll make clear his purposes and his time and for his glory.

You see that in the case of David's choosing there verses 11 to 13. There is one more son. He's the youngest. He's looking after the sheep. And notice, notice, he's not even named even as some of his other brothers are named.

He's not even named until verse 13. Such is David's obscurity or apparent obscurity. Here's this, at this point anyway, this young, unnamed shepherd.

I mean, as far as Jesse's concerned, how could he possibly be king? You know, someone who's more used to looking after sheep than looking after a nation. And, you know, to refer to him as the youngest, well, that word youngest in the original, it's more, the meaning like least important or insignificant.

But he, David, was the Lord's anointed. I mean, of all his brothers who might, who have appeared more suitable to be king, David was chosen of God.

[25 : 04] Why? As we're told, his heart. Was the Lord's. And in a world where, where success is measured in the externals of life, you know, the philosophy biggest is best.

You know, where perfection is measured in what the world regards as getting to the top and all the rewards of success and possessions, looks, the outward things of life.

Well, remember God's standards are different. Now, because we're not saying that possessions, good looks, all the externals are per se wrong. Of course not. God blesses with these things when these things are used for his glory.

But God turns the world upside down. You see it in the church. In those whom God appoints to serve him. Remember what Paul wrote, 1 Corinthians 1, 26.

And following, not many of you are wise according to worldly standards. Not many of you are powerful. Not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise.

[26 : 10] God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong. God chose what is low and despised in the world even those things that are not to bring to nothing things that are so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

And of course when we think of the Lord Jesus, the one who is despised and rejected of men, the man of sorrows, acquainted with grief as Isaiah prophesied of Jesus.

I mean, who would have seen in Jesus the author of life as the saviour? Well, certainly not those who declare sneeringly of Jesus is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joseph and Judas and Simon are not his sisters here with us.

And that contempt for Jesus in his apparent ordinariness, we're told Mark 6, they took offence at him. And certainly not those who Jesus noted regarded him as nothing more than a friend of the despised people of society.

As Matthew tells us, Jesus speaking, Matthew 11, for John came neither eating nor drinking and they say he's a demon. The son of man came eating and drinking and they say look at him, externals, look at him, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.

[27 : 34] What of those who despised Jesus as they saw him hang on the cross in their eyes of unbelief? Seemed the most unlikely of places for a Messiah to be, a Christ to be.

He saved others, he can't save himself, he's the king of Israel, let him come down now from the cross and will believe in him. He trusts in God, let God deliver him now if he desires him. For he's saying, I'm the son of God.

But you know, to those who mock Jesus, who despise the Lord Jesus for what in the world standards of achievement and glory seem so incongruous to a suffering saviour, Jesus who had nowhere to lay his head, but Jesus is the son of God, he is the saviour of the world, yes, but Jesus will be rejected through the externals of human values.

What are we told in Scripture, Psalm 118, Peter echoing in his first letter, the stone that the builder has rejected has become the cornerstone, the rejected son of God.

He's the cornerstone of the church. He's the all-glorious one. He's the one whom God has anointed as king. And you, whom God has gifted with eyes of faith, you see Jesus truly as the one who's been sent from God from above to bring salvation.

[29 : 01] You know him and you worship him for who he truly is. His heart is pure for he is pure, the sinless son of God. Now, of course, we're not equating David's heart with the heart of the Lord Jesus here in terms of purity and sinlessness, but of course we have to say this, that David's heart, his inner life, his true spirituality was directed towards serving God in faithfulness and love.

So yes, in that sense, he was a man after God's heart. The man whom God had informed Samuel these many years before us, as we read there earlier in chapter 13.

So when Samuel does come to David, God speaks to the heart of Samuel. And Samuel knows this is the one whom God has chosen. He'll be anointed as the Lord's chosen king and it'll happen before his brothers.

And in doing that anointing, Samuel's work is going to be completed there in Bethlehem. So yes, in the end of this particular episode in Samuel's life, he came, he saw, and he anointed.

Samuel was obedient to God's call to anoint his chosen king. Even there in his old age, Samuel was still being taught lessons about whom God chooses and, yes, whom God overlooks in particular works of service.

[30 : 27] And it's a lesson that we should all hold close to. You know, in our estimation of what, then who truly honours God. What truly honours God? Who truly honours God? Those who have that wholehearted devotion and service to the living and true God.

But remember above all, remember him who came from heaven to earth. God chose as our saviour. Jesus, who is anointed for that work of redemption.

Yes, from whom many hid their faces and still hide their faces because Jesus doesn't measure up to their estimation of worthiness to be followed. But look to Jesus.

He is the fairest among ten thousand. He is the all-glorious one. And see the Lord Jesus Christ in all his beauty as saviour, as Lord and redeemer.

Put your trust in him and follow him and rejoice in his presence forever. Amen. Let us pray. Lord, we thank you for your word and we pray truly, Lord, that we will know that your hand upon us, your hand upon this congregation leading and guiding us, assuring us of your presence with us at all times.

[31 : 48] Bless then, we pray, your word that forgive anything that's been said amiss from this pulpit. And Lord, may the entrance of your word have entered the hearts of all those gathered here this morning.

And may we know much blessing from that receiving of your word. Help us, Lord, to apply your word in our lives to the glory of your name. We pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen.