

The anointing of David - June Evensong

1 Samuel 15:34-16:18

Mark 4:26-34

A Sermon preached by Emma Hodge at St. Michael & All Angels Church Sandhurst on Sunday 16th June 2024

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost;
Amen

We have probably all heard of David, and many of us may have first come across him as children in the story of David and Goliath, the shepherd boy who went armed with a sling shot to defeat a large man in armour and won (but that's next week's theme)!

We may then come to know about other aspects of his life, such as the fact that he was a king, we may remember that at Christmas we are reminded that Bethlehem is also known as "David's City" (the carol "Once in Royal David's City" is an annual reminder) and if we read the genealogies of Jesus at the start of Matthew and Luke's gospels, we notice that one of Joseph's ancestor is listed as David.

Many of us will also be familiar with the artistic side of his character by some of the poetry he wrote which is recorded in the bible, for example some of the psalms (our psalm tonight, psalm 20, is attributed to him) and that he was a harpist as we are told in our reading tonight where he played the harp at Saul's court.

From tonight's readings we know that he was a handsome young man, that his father was Jesse and that he had 7 brothers and we don't know how many sisters. We will later learn about his friendship with Jonathan but that is a sermon at the end of the month! We are just starting a sermon series on David and we also know an adulterous relationship with Bathsheba and he arranged for her husband to be killed in battle.

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Our reading tonight marked a key moment in David's life,

Where he was called in from the fields to meet a prophet who had travelled to Bethlehem. The prophet was Samuel and he listened to God and it was God who told him to go to Jesse's home.

God then directed Samuel to the person to anoint as God had plans for one of Jesse's sons to be king, a king not of earthly choosing but of God's choosing.

Earlier the people had chosen a king, Saul but God had rejected Saul as King, this was the motivation for the prophet Samuel traveling to Bethlehem so that a new king could be chosen and anointed.

God instructed Samuel not to anoint any of David's older brothers, suggesting that Samuel not looking at the brothers the same way God looks at people, and we are told that God was looking at people's hearts and that by doing this.

This was part of the underlying problem, Saul was king chosen by the people and then he made mistakes and God was unhappy, not because Saul made mistakes but how he reacted to those mistakes.

Samuel was presented with the first 6 of Jesse's sons, and originally thought David's brother ELIAB was the chosen one but God told him that he was rejected because God sees differently to mortals, not looking on the outward appearance but the heart. While this point may be small, I want us to reflect on it. God sees, not as we see; even someone close to God such as Samuel doesn't notice everything, he thought Eliab would be the one to anoint but through that very careful listening to God, he heard God say no, that God knew ELIAB's heart

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and that he was not the one to be anointed, the one who would go on to be king, he was not the one that God had chosen.

In a few weeks we have a general election, where we will be asked to choose, by voting, for members of parliament; a decision where we need to choose who will represent us, who will lead our country and I am sure you can see a parallel, will we be drawn to the outward appearances or will we reflect and pray on, will we ask God to help us see the true heart of the candidates and look beyond their superficial appearance and into their heart? Will we ask God to help us choose how to vote?

Back to our reading, Eliab was not chosen, and at first David wasn't in the room so Jesse was asked if he had other sons and then David was summoned from the fields, it was this boy that God had chosen, David.

David was chosen by God and was anointed by Samuel to become King. Before he even starts his service at Saul's court, David is described to Saul as having the Lord with him, along with his other attributes.

Our reading is set early in David's life, and he would become the King just as God had chosen him to be, but he was not perfect, he made mistakes and not just the affair with Bathsheba, but there were other times where he didn't always follow God's instructions, but even with all the mistakes, not listening to God, when the mistakes were pointed out, he acknowledged that he was in the wrong and accepted his punishment however hard they were. The importance is that David, didn't turn away from God, even if he didn't always listen and follow God's instructions.

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David is mentioned throughout the New Testament including the gospels, the epistles or the letters and Revelation; In the letter to the Hebrews, he is included in the list of notable biblical characters who are known for their faith.

God chose him, David has some memorable stories, stories we may have come across as children, his story is remarkable and has many different aspects to it. David's story is complex and detailed but is fascinating, a story of someone who is chosen and anointed by God and that God is always with him and he doesn't abandon God even when he makes those mistakes. While his early life is summed up in verse 18 "A son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, cunning (or skilled) player of the harp, valiant, man of war, prudent in matters (speech), handsome" it almost sounds like an ideal king, and almost too good to be true, but the description ends with these words "and the Lord is with him"; The Lord knew David's heart, and knew that he wasn't too good to be true, and he chose and through Samuel anointed David to be his King.

It is a reminder for us all that God looks at the heart, at the true person often hidden behind all the outward appearances, and superficial words, God looks on people differently and God sees their heart. When we look at people, how do we see them? With our eyes or how God sees them? How will this influence and change us?