

## Thought for Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> October 2020

Pastor Gordon Hamilton

As a few people have responded with positive comments and suggested that I continue with my Thought for Sunday, I will continue, possibly, until Christmas.

### Read I Samuel 16:1-13

So we leave the New Testament for a few weeks and turn to the book of 1 Samuel and a brief look at the life of David, youngest son of Jesse and great-grandson of Ruth and Boaz, and of course, as we know from the book that precedes 1 Samuel, Ruth was a Gentile. So although Jews are God's favoured people, Gentiles are welcome into the family, even more so now, as shown by CXhris't's death on the cross. What we know is that Saul, the man chosen as the king the Jews wanted, was not a man after God's own heart, which David was, Acts 13:22; *'After removing Saul, he made David their king. God testified concerning him: 'I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.'* When we look for someone to fill a role, I wonder what we look for. Is it someone who has all the relevant qualifications. I guess in these Covid19 coronavirus times, with so many people losing their jobs, not through any fault of their own, when a job comes up, there are literally thousands of people applying for the post and the employers have to sift through the application forms, and a lot of the time they are having to sift through half truths and blatant lies regarding qualifications. In our reading we see that Saul, the first ever king of Israel, has fallen out of favour with God, verse 1; *'The Lord said to Samuel, 'How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king.'* Samuel has the task of anointing the right person to become king, but he has a God who will point him in the right direction. As with many of us, Samuel is concerned for his future; *'Samuel said, 'How can I go? If Saul hears about it, he will kill me.'* Why is it that when God gives us a job to do, we make excuses for not doing it. You will remember when Moses was told to go and bring the people, the Israelites, out of Egypt, Moses says; *'Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?'* (Exodus 3:11) there wasn't anyone who was better qualified, in Exodus 2 we see Moses is brought up in Pharaoh's household. But Moses didn't want to go, **read Exodus 3:12-4:17 to see all the arguments Moses came up with.** The same situation happens to many Old Testament prophets, and in our reading in 1 Samuel 16 the Lord has to remind Samuel that 'he' is 'his' person for the job. **Read verse 2-3** as we have already read in this chapter, Samuel did what the Lord required, but even there the Lord had to point Samuel in the right direction. Samuel may have been tempted to say to Jesse, 'The Lord has told me to anoint one of your sons.' We are not told that was what happened. We are told that Samuel consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice. I'm sure we are aware that Jesse's first thought would have been it would be the eldest son who he would anoint. So when Samuel sees Eliab, we are told in verse 6; *'Surely the Lord's anointed stands here before the Lord.'* but verse 7 tells us **read verse 7...** That is a stark reminder to each one of us, it is not about outward appearances, *'The Lord looks at the heart.'* And the Lord knows our hearts, and every thought in our head. *'Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to Jesse, 'The Lord has not chosen any of these.'* Then Samuel asks if these are all of his sons, and finds out there is one more, *'but he*

*is tending the sheep.* I can remember being on mission in 2001, as I said last week, it was on the Isle of Wight. Sometimes we would finish the evening in the local pub, not to have a drink, but to talk to those in the pub about faith in Jesus Christ. I can remember one night in particular as we gathered there, there was a lady standing at the bar, and the leader of the mission had got into the pub first and had tried to speak to her about Jesus, she gave him short shift. I came in with my friend from Northern Ireland, Tony, who could talk to anyone. Tony went up to her and he was also rebuffed. The same scenario happened with each one who arrived until David came into the bar. David was not very confident and, on occasions, struggled to find the right words. As we all sat and watched, David spent ten minutes or more talking to this lady about Jesus, about faith, and even prayed with and for her. We all felt reprimanded by the Lord. What did the Lord say to Samuel? *'The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.'* What we see in our reading is that Samuel calls each of Jesse's seven sons before him, but still we read, verse 10; *'The Lord has not chosen these.'* Samuel must have wondered what was going on. The Lord had told him to go Jesse of Bethlehem, verse 1; *'I have chosen one of his sons to be king.'* But having seen seven of his sons, Samuel presumes that is all of them, verse 11; *'Are these all the sons you have?'* *'Jesse answered. There is still the youngest, He is tending the sheep.'* Samuel said, *'Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives.'* Samuel must have been relieved when David arrives and the Lord says to him; *'Rise and anoint him; he is the one.'* Now the thing that interests me, is that David is not anointed as king, he is not anointed in front of hundreds of people, it appears David is anointed in front of just his family. I wonder what his brothers thought of all this. I'm sure you will remember the story of Joseph, of the coat of many colours fame, Joseph was the youngest son, Joseph tended the sheep in the fields, and Joseph was used mightily by God, much to his older brothers annoyance. We are not told there was any jealousy by David's brothers, but we are told that after being anointed, David went back to tending his father's sheep before going into service in king Saul's household, playing the harp. For David to go from shepherd to king, would need a bit of grooming. What better way than to join the King's household and make friends with Jonathan, Saul's son and expected heir. But God's ways are not our ways, *'the Lord looks at the heart.'*

Faithful one, so unchanging,  
Ageless One, You're my Rock of peace.  
Lord of all, I depend on You,  
I call out to You again and again.  
I call out to You again and again.  
You are my rock in times of trouble.  
You lift me up when I fall down.  
All through the storm Your love is the anchor,  
My hope is in You alone.

Brian Doerksen.  
Copyright © 1989 Mercy/Vineyard Publishing/Adm. by CopyCare.