



Morrison Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church
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January 10, 2010
1st Sunday after Epiphany
1 Samuel 16:1-13
Pastor Randy Ott

First Lesson: 1 Samuel 16:1-13
Psalm of the Day: Psalm 2
Second Lesson: Titus 3:4-7
Gospel: Luke 3:15-17, 21, 22

God Anoints on His Terms

1. He knows more than we do
2. He gives more than we deserve

Those of you that are older, do you remember back when you were children and you decided to play a game and you had to pick teams? Do you recall doing that at all? If you weren't one of the people doing the picking, do you remember thinking to yourself, when the captain or whatever they were called picked someone, "What in the world did they pick them for? Why don't they pick me?" Or maybe you were already picked and they picked someone and you said, "Why did you pick that person? Why didn't you get the other person?" Do ever remember thinking that way as a kid? Did you ever think to yourself, "Our captain is an idiot. We have no shot." Of course that's just how we think as kids, right? We stop that thinking about the time we get our driver's license right? I don't think so.

Did you ever find yourself looking around at what's going on in the world and saying, "Why is God doing that?" Do you ever see the things that are going on in your life and say, "Why is God letting that happen? He should be doing this, or he should be doing that. What he is doing is wrong. It isn't right. He should be doing something else." I think we all face that at one time or another, don't we? We all have that little kid in us that still thinks we know best about what God should be doing or how he should be doing it or when he should be doing it.

I suppose Samuel was the same we that day when God came and told him to get up and go anoint a new king. First of all, he didn't want to go anoint a new king. What had just happened is that the Lord had told Saul to completely destroy the Amalekites, completely destroy them. Samuel came after the battle and he said to Saul, "What's this I hear; the sound of sheep? You were supposed to destroy everything your enemies had. That's what God told you to do." Saul said, "Oh yeah, we did that. We destroyed everything. We just kept the best to offer as sacrifices to God." Samuel had to say to Saul, "You dummy. What does 'everything' mean?" Act on God's terms, not on your own.

Because Saul made up some excuses and what not; Saul had recently built a monument to himself where he wanted the people to worship him. He had fallen away from God, so God told Samuel to tell Saul, "I'm taking the kingdom away from you. I've rejected you as king. I'm going to give it to someone else." Samuel was starting to walk

away. Saul dove at his feet and grabbed his robe and it ripped his robe. Samuel said, "Just as you have ripped this robe, the Lord has ripped the kingdom from you."

Samuel gave Saul that message, but Samuel didn't like it. He said to God, "Why do you have to take it from him? God, why don't you just change him? Why don't you do this differently? Why do you have to reject him and take the kingdom away from him?" For 24 years after this, until Saul died, Samuel never saw Saul again and it says that he mourned for him every day. He didn't like what God was doing, to a point, but he kept doing it because he was a faithful servant. But he couldn't understand why.

So God says, "Go and anoint one of Jesse's sons." And Samuel says, "I can't go. Saul might hear about it and kill me." He voices, I suppose, his displeasure with what God was doing with this excuse, when in reality, the problem was that he just didn't like what God was doing. God said, "Here's what you do to take care of that."

Then he gets there and he is met with people that don't want to see him, people that tremble when they see him. You think to yourself, "Why are they trembling?" I suppose it could be that maybe they heard what Samuel had said to Saul and Saul is going to take his revenge on Samuel and that might now come on their city as well. But it also could be, you know how God had told Saul to kill everyone, he kept the king alive. Samuel had just said to Saul, "Bring the king to me." And the king thought, "Surely the time of death is long past. They must be going to do something nice for me now;" and then Samuel took and killed King Agag because Saul had failed. So maybe the people of Bethlehem had heard what Samuel had just done to this king. Maybe they were afraid of him that way. We aren't told. We are just told they were afraid.

But here they finally get through all that rigmarole and they get to what they are there for; they are going to sacrifice to the Lord, "consecrate yourself." Notice that Samuel takes and consecrates Jesse and his family by himself. Then they go off and Jesse has the sons come by and Samuel sees Eliab and he thinks this has got to be the guy. He looks like a king. He's tall. He's handsome. He's good looking. He carries himself like a king. "Surely this is the king." Then he finds out the great truth that he had not learned yet. That is that God anoints whom God will. He anoints whom he will for his reasons, not for our reasons. He does what he does for his reasons, not for our reason.

That's a good thing; first of all, because we are sinful. We are foolish. We want things we shouldn't want. We do things we shouldn't do. And our ideas left on their own, running things, would run everything into the ground. God is holy and perfect and gracious and loving and always has our best interest at heart, even when we can't understand it. So Samuel gets the lesson "You're not God. You look at the outward things. You look at what he looks like. I'm looking at the heart."

You might think to yourself, "Lord, why didn't you do that when you chose Saul?" Saul had served the Lord faithfully, but Saul got so full of himself with that power that what happened was exactly what God had warned the Israelites would happen. The Israelites had as a king God himself but they wanted to be like the other kingdoms.

They wanted a king they could see that was there all the time, and that king became a burden to them.

Sometimes in order to teach us great truths, the Lord has to give us what we ask for so that we learn that we are fools. Our way of handling things and our way of doing things is not always the best way. We need to learn to despair of our own ability, our own intelligence and say, "Lord, there are times that you make it so clear to me that I don't know that much. Lord, I need you to help me through these difficult times because I can't handle them on my own. I don't have the ability. I don't have the strength."

Sometimes it takes what Samuel had to go through, learning how God does things and why God does things. He does them because he knows more than we do. So often you and I want to tell God how to run his universe or at least the little corner of it where we live, right? We want to tell God how he should be taking care of us, how he should be providing for our needs. He tells us, "I am going to give you everything you need for life." We say, "That's nice Lord, but this is what I really want." And when he doesn't give us what we want, we start to accuse him of not being loving, not being gracious and not all the things that he has told us that he is. Our lives become full of disagreements over petty little things simply because we think we know best and we don't have true humility that just lets God be God. Instead, we want to be God. It just leads to problems. It led to problems for the Israelites. It leads to problems for you and me.

I guess one of the things that you and I should do is pray that God's Spirit would be poured into our hearts in such a way that we learn this lesson without having to go through so much hardship, that we simply listen to God's Word and in faith take him for what he says. Then I suppose you and I are going to have to pray, "Lord, forgive us for those many, many times we have not; where we thought we knew more than you did, and where we went our own way, ignored your Word and did the things you said not to do; where we spoke in anger because we thought it would bring relief; where we spoke with words that hurt because we thought it would make us feel better. All it did Lord was cause bigger problems in our lives. Forgive us for these times." The truth of the matter is, you and I are sinful idiots and we do that all the time.

But the truth of the matter also is what we see this day; that even though the Lord had all these people pass before Samuel and all of them looked like a king, the one that the father Jesse wouldn't even call by name – did you notice that? After he went through all six of the kids and God had said "no" to all of them, Samuel says to Jesse, "Do you have any other kids, any other sons," and Jesse says, "Yeah, there's that shepherd runt, but he's out taking care of the sheep." He doesn't even call him by name. He doesn't even say, "Yeah, there's my son, David. I have him out taking care of the sheep." He says, "There's just the guy that's out there with the smelly sheep."

We don't always understand that God is going to work in ways that are different than ours. So he sends for him, and he sees him, and God says, "This is the one. Anoint him." So Samuel does what God called him to do, even though Samuel had thought

that just changing Saul was the answer. He is faithful. He does what God says even though he might not understand it at that point in time. He anoints him.

Then look at what it says there at the end. From that day on, the Spirit of the Lord came on David in power. It's not that the Spirit wasn't there before, but now the Spirit gave him special blessings so that it would equip him to go through what he would have to go through. If you don't know what David went through in his life, you are missing something. Get into the Word of God so that God can pour his Spirit out into your heart and see all the things that David went through. Realize at one point in his life, David, who was anointed to be the next king, was sitting and playing his harp for Saul when he was in Saul's house serving him. Saul threw a spear and tried to make a "David kabob" at the supper table. He tried to throw a spear across the table to kill David. David had to flee for his life. David, even though he had served Saul as a general in his army and served him faithfully, was accused by Saul of many things. He had to flee for his life. He had to go and try to find refuge among some of the places that he had defeated in battle. In order to do it, he let everything grow out. He didn't take care of himself. He drooled all over his beard. He acted like he was literally insane so that he could hide out from Saul. Here's a guy that God had said, "I have special plans for you," and now this is what he has to do.

You would think that David would kind of get sick and tired of having to do some of the stuff he had to do and say, "God, why don't you take care of me better?" There are times in his life that I'm sure that he did, but read in some of his Psalms and read his trust in God. Read about how he put what God said above what his own eyes at times would see. Then marvel at the things he went through. Don't think that David was perfect. By no means was he perfect. But the Spirit of the Lord was poured out on him in power so that he could endure things that you and I never have had to endure.

If we want the ability to endure the things that we have to endure, I would suggest that we spend some time in the Book of Psalms. Luther called it a "mini Bible," and as you read the Psalms that David wrote, God will pour his Spirit out into your hearts. He's already poured out the Spirit into your heart when he anointed you with the Spirit when he poured out Jesus' righteousness on you at your baptism. Now he continues to want to pour out that Spirit to you and give you more than you deserve, just like he gave David more than David deserved, the runt of the family that dad wouldn't even call by name. He made him into the greatest king the children of Israel ever had. The warrior king who expanded their borders and who was blessed greatly by God; everyone else is described as being faithful to God, all the kings that followed in Israel, by saying they walked in the footsteps of their father David and walked with God. If it was said that you walked in the footsteps of David, it was God's way, the Holy Spirit's way, of having a Bible writer say you were a faithful believer.

So if you want to have the Spirit poured out on you, read his Word. Don't make excuses about busy-ness. Don't make excuses about this or excuses about that. Just acknowledge you need the Spirit's power to live in a sinful world. Then get that Spirit's power from the Word of God. If you think, "I can't understand it," then go down to the

library, pick up a People's Bible and see if that will help you. If that doesn't help you, then pick up a different commentary and see if that will help you. If that doesn't help you, then talk to a fellow Christian. If that doesn't help you, you can try coming to one of the two or three or five or six Bible classes we run every week.

God wants to pour out his Spirit into your heart so that you can face the things of this world. Satan wants you to think you're too busy or too important or you know it all already and you don't need that. So who are you going to believe?