

1 Samuel 16:1-13

SI: This morning we turn a page in our study of 1 Samuel.

Saul is still the king in name and he has a role to play,

but David steps onto the stage and from this point on, he is the hero of the story.

He progresses, against all odds, to the throne of Israel.

All of the heroic men and women of faith in the Old Testament foreshadowed Jesus Christ in different ways. Could say they are prototypes of Christ.

But David is the greatest of all prototypes of Christ.

Many of the ways we know Jesus as our Lord and Savior and relate to him are through our understanding of David.

Jesus was not a shepherd, he was a carpenter’s son.

But we know Jesus and relate to him as our shepherd because David was a shepherd, and out of his experience, he wrote the 23rd Psalm.

Jesus was not a king in the common sense, he didn’t wield a sword and lead armies into battle and conquer kingdoms.

But we can sing *All Hail, King Jesus*, and *Crown Him With Many Crowns*

because he has inherited the crown and throne that King David established.

The significance of David to our experience of the Christian life is immense.

This is a great passage of Scripture—not just because David is introduced for the first time, but also because it contains another key theme of our faith—the importance of the heart.

INTRO: You are all familiar with the iconic bumper sticker, I love New York.

The letter I, then a big red heart, and then the letters NY.

When Allison and I lived in Ft. Lauderdale in late 80s, we saw lots of those

I “heart” NY bumper stickers because so many people down there were from New York or New Jersey.

But there was another bumper sticker that made us chuckle. It said:

If you “heart” NY, take I-95 north.

I’ve seen many variations of the I “heart” NY bumper sticker. Sure you have too.

I “heart” the Atlanta Braves

I “heart” Labrador Retrievers

I “heart” my .38 Smith & Wesson

When Americans talk about the heart, it means something you love or at least like a lot. It mostly has to do with emotional attraction or caring about something.

But when Bible talks about heart, means something more than emotional attraction.

The heart is the inner life, the genuine person—

the man or woman, boy or girl, as he or she really is.

The heart is what produces thoughts and attitudes, motives and desires, feelings, convictions, persuasions, loves and hatreds.

The heart is the true personality and character of an individual.

So in a sense the Bible is a heart manual.

From beginning to end it’s an examination and critique of our hearts and the story of God’s zeal to redeem our hearts.

You can’t understand the Christian faith if you don’t understand the profound significance of the heart.

As I said, this introduction of David is one of the great heart passages in the Bible.

Remember David is the only person in redemption history who is described as a man after God’s own heart.

So let’s look at it and explore this theme of the heart.

Three points, I’ll give them to you as we go.

MP#1 Biblical personhood is focused on the heart

When the Bible speaks of the human person, it describes us in two aspects—the outer self and the inner self, older English translations, outer man, inner man.

The inner man, the inner self, is the essential you.

There are different terms the Bible uses for the inner self such as mind, thoughts, spirit, soul, even imaginations—and each of those has a particular nuance.

But all of these terms are collected in this big basket term—the heart.

The Bible uses heart more than any other term to speak of the inner man—well over 500 times.

Over and over again the Bible makes the point that everything of importance that we do or say, our actions, our decisions—all of them—are products of our hearts.

Let me read you a bunch of Bible verses.

I'm not going to give you the book and chapter and verse references.

Just listen for the common themes about the heart.

*Out of the heart flow the issues of life.

*Above all else guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.

*As a man thinks in his heart, so he is.

*A happy heart makes the face cheerful.

*A discerning heart seeks knowledge.

*A cheerful heart has a continual feast.

*A wise man's heart guides his mouth.

*A malicious man disguises himself with his lips, but in his heart he harbors deceit.

*The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart.

*These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.

*For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.

*All a man's ways seem right to him, but the Lord weighs the heart.

*You will seek me and you will find me, when you seek me with all your heart.

And on and on in that same way.

Paul Tripp says the heart is the causal core of our personhood.

In other words, what causes you to say what you say and do what you do, are not the situations and relationships around you—it's your heart.

We don't want to accept that. Because the implications are damning.

The way we want to frame things is that the cause of what I do and say is largely the impact external situations and relationships have on me.

That person made me mad.

This allows us to always put ourselves in a good light.

I may have said or done something mean—but that's not the real me.
But the Bible says—Yes, that is the real you.

Because out of the heart flow the issues of life.

And out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.

Those of you who watched the Paul Tripp marriage videos a few years ago might remember his illustration.

He held up a full water bottle, shook it, and water came out.

Then he asked the audience a question:

Why did water come out of the bottle?

Everybody said: Because you shook it.

Then he said, let me ask you the question again, listen carefully.

Why did water come out of the bottle?

The answer is obvious. Because that's what was in there all along.

The shaking just revealed it.

Situations and relationships don't make us speak or act in certain ways—
they just reveal what is already in our hearts.

When we say something cruel or sarcastic and get called on it,

Our usual response is: I'm sorry. I really didn't mean that.

But a true response would be: Please forgive me for saying what was in my heart.

That's the Bible's view. We are who we really are in our hearts.

All we say and do flow from the deep desires, motives, attitudes, feelings,
convictions, loves, and hatreds generated by our heart.

Proverbs says:

As water reflects a man's face, so a man's heart reflects the man.

So, if a person is to become a follower of Christ his or her heart must be changed—
by the power of the Holy Spirit.

That brings us to the next big truth . . .

MP#2 God sees and wants your heart

The writers of the Old Testament loved wordplay, but sometimes we miss the wordplay when the Hebrew original translated into English. Let me show you some interesting wordplay in this passage.

Verse 1, the Lord says to Samuel, I have chosen one of Jesse's sons to be king. A literal translation is: I have seen me one of Jesse's sons.

It's a Hebrew verb see—the verb ra-ah.

Now look down at verse 6. Jesse's eldest son Eliab arrived and Samuel saw him (ra-ah) and thought that he was surely the Lord's anointed.

Now look at verse 7. The Lord says to Samuel.

Don't consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him.

That word appearance is a noun form of the same word—ra-ah.

Then the Lord continues—For the Lord does not look at (ra-ah) the things man looks at (ra-ah). Man looks at (ra-ah) the outward appearance (ra-ah), but the Lord looks at (ra-ah), the heart.

There's a right kind of seeing and a wrong kind of seeing.

The Lord's seeing is the right kind of seeing, but man's often is not.

We think we can see, but we are easily deceived because we can't see the heart. When Samuel saw how tall and handsome Eliab was, he thought he was next king. He thought he was God's chosen anointed one because he looked like a king. Isn't it interesting what a powerful influence image and appearance were even on someone as spiritually mature as Samuel?

Remember Saul was also tall and handsome.

Saul's failure should have taught Samuel not to look at the outward appearance.

But here he is again impressed by Eliab's good looks.

This ought to be a wake up call for us. We live in a visual age.

Image and appearance are enormously important, but we have to resist that.

Samuel saw how tall and impressive Eliab looked.

But that the Lord see? It doesn't say exactly, but it gives us a hint.

God said that he saw Eliab's heart and rejected him.

It's the same word used for the Lord's rejection of Saul.

So it wasn't just that Eliab wasn't God's choice.

Apparently, Eliab's heart was not turned toward God either.

So the Lord rejected him. God wanted a man after his own heart.

What if you were married to a person whose outward actions were fine and

seemed to be loving. But what if you could see that person's heart.
And what if you saw in his heart or her heart not just indifference toward you,
but actual dislike of you.
What if you saw a desire to be married to someone else besides you?
A wish that you were dead so they could get out of the marriage.
If you could see that, would you want to be with that husband or wife?

On the other hand, what if you had a spouse who often stumbled and messed
up when it came to how he behaved or how she behaved.
What if he did and said things sometimes that bothered you.
But you could also see into this person's heart and it was full of affection for
you, and respect for you, and desire for you alone.
Wouldn't you rather have that person beside you? Of course you would.

Well, God can see the heart.

And he wants a heart that loves him and is committed to him.
In the book of Proverbs there is a monologue, father is talking to his son.
Trying to share with him words of wisdom.
It's a picture of God's fatherly relationship with us.
And the father in Proverbs says:

My son, give me your heart. Because he knows that if his son gives him his
heart, then eventually he will give him every other part of his life too.

Brings us to the third truth . . .

MP#3 Attending to your heart is the great business of the Christian life.

In Ezekiel 36:26 the Lord says to Israel:

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you;

I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.

That's a description of being born again.

New hearts. A new causal core of your personhood.

You become a completely different person inside.

It's like the difference between a heart of flesh vs. a heart of stone.

It's heart that is oriented toward Jesus Christ. Isn't that amazing?

There's something else that happens—you not only get a new heart—

you are able to see your heart and critique it and judge it.

Because even though you have a new heart that is oriented toward the Lord,

your heart is not perfect.

There are still residual motives and attitudes and desires from your old,

unregenerate self.

You have loves and hatreds that are the opposite of what God loves and hates.

So this means a life long work of attending to your heart—

judging its corrupt motives, bringing it under the control of your higher self.

The Puritan John Flavel said:

“The keeping and right managing of the heart in every condition is the great business of a Christian's life.”

It's so easy to make the mistake of thinking the great business of the Christian life is conforming our behavior to the Bible. Doing this or that thing God commands.

But you can govern our outward behavior for all sorts of reasons that don't

have anything to do with God—for the approval of others, orderly life for selves.

But if you are attending to your heart, judging your inner motives and desires—

then you don't even need to worry about your outward behavior.

That will take care of itself, because as a man thinks in his heart, so is he.

What are you thinking, what are you saying to your heart?

There was a Scottish nobleman in late 1600s named Alexander Gordon of Earlston.

He was a believer but he had a life-shaping experience at a men's retreat.

The speaker's theme was the heart, and the motives of the heart.

From that point on Alexander Gordon began to judge the motives and movements

of his heart. He began to ask himself, not just, am I doing the right thing—

but what's my motive?

He was a ruling elder in his church and there was a huge controversy about the

king's attempt to force the Church of Scotland to adopt certain practices. Alexander Gordon made a very brave speech before the King and the Parliament on the rights of the church to worship according to Scripture. When he returned home and attended the next presbytery meeting, his fellow elders wanted to pass a motion of thanks for his brave speech.

But this was Gordon's response.

"Fathers and brothers," he said, "the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, and you do not know it. For I had a deep, malicious, revengeful motive in my heart behind all my fine and patriotic speeches in Parliament. I hated Montrose [the King's agent] more than I loved the freedom of the Kirk. Spare me, therefore, the sentence of putting that act of shame on your books."

Whether or not you need to speak that way when people compliment you is another issue. Usually the best response to compliments is a simple thank you.

But certainly you ought to be speaking to yourself this way all the time.

Judging your actions by what you know is in your heart, and doing so in an unrelenting, demanding way.

Was I loving God or myself when I did that?

Was I hungering and thirsting after righteousness or after the applause and approval of others?

Was I seeking the good of my neighbor, seeking to love him or her as I love myself and so fulfill the law of Christ, or was I filling the box and checking the square?

It's easy to live the Christian life without asking ourselves the hard questions.

But this is where the story of David is so encouraging.

What did the Lord see when he looked into David's heart?

He didn't see a sinless heart. He didn't see a heart of perfect motives.

He saw a believing heart. He saw a heart that hungered and thirsted for righteousness he did not yet possess. He saw a man judging his own heart.

So the Lord said—that's the man I have seen me to be king.

Jesus Christ is the only man with a perfect heart.

But he gives us new hearts through his Holy Spirit.

Takes away our hearts of stone and gives us hearts of flesh that yearn for him.

And then he tells us—

Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.