

Today we will be talking about how God often chooses the most unlikely. I thought about who would be the best people in the church to go on a mission trip. The most experienced, who can speak the language the best, the oldest. God has chosen our high school students to go with leaders who have big hearts to serve him. And God is using and will use them in big ways.

Today we begin a summertime look at David. David is a great person to study because we can relate to him. He is very human. He succeeds and fails in big ways. This week, we will look at God choosing David to be his leader, when he is the most unlikely. While the world looks at the outward appearance, God looks at David and sees his heart. Even if you are an unlikely choice, God can use you if you have your heart in the right place.

This story takes place when Saul is being rejected as king because he disobeys God as king. God is using the prophet Samuel to identify a new king for Israel. Let's pick up the story there.

1 Samuel 16:1-13

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."

2 But Samuel said, "How can I go? Saul will hear about it and kill me."

The Lord said, "Take a heifer with you and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.' 3 Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what to do. You are to anoint for me the one I indicate."

4 Samuel did what the Lord said. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled when they met him. They asked, "Do you come in peace?"

5 Samuel replied, "Yes, in peace; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. Consecrate yourselves and come to the sacrifice with me." Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

6 When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, "Surely the Lord's anointed stands here before the Lord."

7 But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

8 Then Jesse called Abinadab and had him pass in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, "The Lord has not chosen this one either." 9 Jesse then had Shammah pass by, but Samuel said, "Nor has the Lord chosen this one." 10 Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to him, "The Lord has not chosen these." 11 So he asked Jesse, "Are these all the sons you have?"

"There is still the youngest," Jesse answered, "but he is tending the sheep."

Samuel said, "Send for him; we will not sit down[a] until he arrives."

12 So he sent and had him brought in. He was ruddy, with a fine appearance and handsome features.

Then the Lord said, "Rise and anoint him; he is the one."

13 So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came upon David in power. Samuel then went to Ramah.

Pray: May God use this word to change each of us – the listener and the speaker alike.

Today we'll be looking at a great character, one of the most well know – who is like us. But it's not just his successes we'll study – not just his failures. But what makes him special. It's his heart. See the title for this series. Here it is:

Graphic – After God's own heart

That's what sets David apart – not that he can play the harp, not that he is a great warrior that we'll hear about in the weeks ahead, not that he's a great king which he was. Not that he is an adulterer and causes the husband to be killed in battle, not that his son takes his throne and tries to kill him – but look at his heart – that is what sets David apart.

Here's where it begins. Samuel is looking for a new king to replace Saul – and God sends him to Jesse - who has many sons. After going through seven sons – God says keep looking, so Samuel asks to see the youngest who was out tending the sheep.

Samuel was obedient to God. He did not anoint the most handsome or oldest. Samuel would not sit down until the baby of the family came in from the fields. He did not give up. When Samuel sees David, God says, "Rise and anoint him, he is the one." Samuel anoints him to be the next king. Why?

Here's why. Let's re-read verse 7. Let's look at together.

"But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height (talking about an older son) for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." 1 Samuel 16:7

ZPC has for many, many years held high as the six marks of the disciple. These are marks that we can shoot for to more closely follow God. The first mark is the one that the others rest upon. It is "A Heart for Christ Alone."

This is what minds transformed should be based on. The reason we have arms of love and a voice to speak the good news. Because first our hearts are sold out for Jesus Christ. It is why we would bend our knees and get down on the ground to pray. It is why we would have a spirit to serve and a spirit of stewardship. It is our heart. We need to get our hearts in the right place.

In order to look at this story in some applicable ways, I want to look at what our culture might say and what God might say. Let's start here:

Culture says: Appearance

God says: Heart

What does it look like to have a heart that follows God? What does it sound like?  
Listen to David's heart in this Psalm – Psalm 86.

"Hear, O Lord, and answer me,  
for I am poor and needy.  
Guard my life, for I am devoted to you. (devotion)  
You are my God; save your servant  
who trusts in you.  
Have mercy on me, O Lord, (asking for mercy)  
for I call to you all day long. (calling on God)  
Bring joy to your servant,  
for to you, O Lord,  
I lift up my soul." Psalm 86:1-4 (David humbly lifts up himself to God)

Isn't that great? You can hear David's heart in his prayer. You can hear his humility.

"Teach me your way, O Lord,  
and I will walk in your truth;  
give me an undivided heart, (heart – undivided from the world – focused on God)  
that I may fear your name. (respect and reverence for God)  
I will praise you, O Lord my God, with all my heart;  
I will glorify your name forever. (honor and glory given to God)  
For great is your love toward me;  
you have delivered me from the depths of the grave." Psalm 86:11-13

David has a heart to praise God and to humbly walk and follow God – to fear God – to bring glory to God - not to self!

Culture says: Pick the older son

God says: Age doesn't matter

David had 7 older brothers and was just a boy. So what. God didn't care. Paul says in 1 Timothy 4:12:

"Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity."

That's what our teens are doing this week in Mexico – being an example. As David was as a young man. May we all be examples in things like love, faith, and purity.

Culture says: America's Got Talent

God says: You belong to me

You don't have to be the most talented. You have to have a heart in the right place. You each have talents – but need to be willing to use them for God. What are your talents? Is it relationships, working with hands, science, numbers, computers, art, music? You have talents – you belong to God – so work on this week discovering how to use your talents to serve God and others.

Culture says: American Idol

God says: The body is not made up of one part but of many

The beauty of the church is that the church needs everyone with all our gifts – how God has gifted you – to need you to succeed so that God can be glorified. Use your gifts for Him! You may be quieter, louder, but God uses all gifts and all people to make up his body – God needs you. So discern your gifts and dedicate them to God in your heart.

Culture says: Win

God says: First shall be last

I was thinking this week what I love about sports. I like to win. When I was younger I really liked to win. I attended several games this weekend for Little League where 3 of my kids were playing for tourney to be champion of their age groups. I wanted them to win. Why?

I love my kids and want them to do well. I am proud of them in public. I have to work hard not wanting them to win for the wrong reasons – to make me look good – or to defeat and put down the other team. But I have passion for my kids.

I need to ask, is my passion for God like that? As a father on Father's Day, the way I love my kids is the way God loves me. And God loves each of us so much more than that! More than we can even comprehend! I need to remember that winning is not so important but to be more like Jesus. Jesus said the first shall be last. That is really counter-cultural – it is what God wants. Don't win for yourself or your kids – win for God – be a servant. Be last if necessary. Be a teammate – put others first, be an example. Choose to put your whole heart into your faith – the way I feel about my kids when I watch them play – God feels about your when he watches you!

Culture says: Saul was tall

God says: Come and follow me

Saul was tall - a head taller than others. He stood out. He was looked up to. But he failed. He did not obey God. Jesus says if you love me, you will obey my commands. Saul simply failed to give respect and honor to God and chose himself. God looked at the heart of David to replace him. You don't have to be tall to serve God.

There was a famous American 200 years ago I've been reading about. He was made fun of for being short and small. He was between 5'4" and 5'6" and slight of build – basically he was a skinny, small man. But his height didn't matter.

He was called the Father of the Constitution. He wrote much of the bill of rights – which ensures our freedom to assemble and freedom to worship. He was James Madison – our 4<sup>th</sup> president. James Madison was much shorter than LeBron James and much more impactful on our nation's history.

On Father's Day, I want our dads to have a Heart for Christ alone and share this source with you. It is from one of my favorite websites. I think it can relate to all of us, Dads or not. Think of it in terms of relationships.

On Father's Day, be an All Pro Dad.  
[www.allprodad.com](http://www.allprodad.com)

1. Love your wife - love others with our heart
2. Spend time with your kids - grab moments with them
3. Be a role model – be an example
4. Understand and enjoy your kids
5. Show affection – show passion
6. Secure your family's financial future - this shows commitment and leadership
7. Eat together – be in relationship
8. Discipline with a gentle spirit
9. Pray and worship together – not just with family but with church family.
10. Realize you're a father forever

Many of these relate to all of us, dads and not dads, male and female, young or old. Look at the odd numbers – 1,3,5,7, and 9. Love others, be an example, show passion and care for others, be with others, spend time with them, and pray and worship with others – as an example. Be an all pro Dad, be a person who has a heart for God. Be a Dad with a big heart, and a disciple with a big heart.

Culture says: I am the most unlikely of the bunch  
God says: I'm looking at your heart

Do you have a heart for Christ alone? That's the question for all of us. Have a heart sold out for God. If you don't have it, ask for it, be desperate for God. Change your prayers. Dig into the Word, change your lifestyle to more pattern yourself after God's desires. Ask God for that heart, then begin to live like it. Have heartfelt, humble, prayers like David – give your heart to him. He will listen.

Be a person of the heart – passion, joy, human, focused on God – after God's own heart.

Don't be a person of just outward appearance. Be deeper, more meaningful – focused on God's will. And when you do, you won't be disappointed.

Closing prayer: Let's pray as David prayed – in Psalm 51:

Create in me a pure heart, O God,  
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

11 Do not cast me from your presence  
or take your Holy Spirit from me.

12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation  
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

We want to be a church who shows our hearts – who are hearts sold out for Christ.

This is much more important than our outward appearance.

Help us not to do what our culture expects, but to humbly honor you with what you  
want. Help us to love you because you first loved us.

Change our hearts o God, to follow you, we humbly ask you. Help us to have hearts  
after your own heart - Hearts for Christ Alone! In Jesus name we pray, amen.