

### Looking at the God Who Sees

#### (1 Samuel 16:1-7) ESV

The Lord said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go. I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons." 2 And Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears it, he will kill me." And the Lord said, "Take a heifer with you and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.' 3 And invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do. And you shall anoint for me him whom I declare to you." 4 Samuel did what the Lord commanded and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling and said, "Do you come peaceably?" 5 And he said, "Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. Consecrate yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice." And he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice. 6 When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, "Surely the Lord's anointed is before him." 7 But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart."

*Lord, Your compassions never fail; they are new every morning. Great is Your faithfulness. And as we gather here this evening, I know Your people are tired and exhausted, in the middle of the week. But as we speak of You, as we converse and talk about the living God, it should always be relevant, it should always be meaningful. And I pray for Your name's sake, that You would bless this evening, for the building up and the encouragement and the instruction of Your people this evening, that You, by Your Spirit, would bless us. Lord we pray for those that are not with us. I know that there are many that are sick. I think of Carol in the Philippines and just pray for her and Rylee, that You will continue to protect them, bless them as they are there sharing the name of Jesus with the Philippino's, that You would watch over her and bless her mightily. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Well it's good to have you here this evening. Tonight we're going to take a break from the series on Foundations of Love that we've been doing. We're going to pick that up after the Missions Conference, and we're going to do just a brief little interlude this evening.

If you go to our website up in the top right-hand corner of our website there is a red "Reformed" link. You press that and it takes you to a link that says, "Faith Community Church is committed to the biblical and historical theology of the reformation." And then we state some of the Sola's (the Latin term for "alone"), *Sola* – alone, *Sola Fide* (faith alone), *Sola Gratia* (grace alone), *Sola Scriptura* (Scripture alone). We say those are defining emphases of evangelical Christianity. If you are going to be an evangelical, you must believe that Scripture is our authority, and it's by faith alone and Christ alone and through grace alone. These are defining emphases in evangelical Christianity. Well it would probably be remiss of me this evening, since we are a reformational church and hold to the doctrines of the reformation, not to mention that this weekend it's not Halloween. This weekend is Reformation Day. That's October 31<sup>st</sup>, is Reformation Day. As a matter of fact if you look up in Wikipedia, they list Reformation Day as a religious holiday. It is a religious holiday, October 31<sup>st</sup>, 1517, is when we celebrate, if you will, the birth of the Reformation when Martin Luther nailed 95 Theses on Wittenburg door, the Castle of Wittenburg.

I was at chapel this morning at Faith Christian Academy and spoke to the students there. It was part of it, and they had a whole Reformation Day celebration, and it was really neat to see and to be a part of. Mr. Eames focused on one particular, each year they do it and they focus on one leader of the Reformation, and this morning they focused on Martin Luther; Martin Luther nailing his 95 Theses on Wittenburg door. And in that Theses there's a number of things that Luther was protesting, but one of the significant ones was the sale of indulgences. The Catholic church basically funded their great building projects by taking money for the forgiveness of sins. John Tetzel had a little phrase, "As soon as the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs." And so they would go around Germany getting people to buy indulgences to free their loved ones from purgatory.

Luther, *Sola Scriptura*, looked at Scripture and said, "What? What's this?" And Mr. Eames played - it's a remarkable film if you haven't seen it, it's called "Martin Luther." It's "Martin

Luther,” 1953, it’s classic, black and white. You can get it on Amazon DVD, I think for 5 bucks. If you haven’t seen it, it’s worth it. It’s one of the best things that has ever come out of Hollywood. And they played about, I don’t know, about a 4 or 5-minute scene when Martin Luther is in his church or in his office with his mentor who is a monk, they are both monks at this time, and Luther is sharing with him the transformation that has taken place as he has studied Scripture. And he takes him to (Romans 1:17), “The just shall live by faith.” And his mentor questions him in this movie, “What are you trying to do Martin Luther? What are you going to do if you take away their relics and their statues and their beads, take away these things, what do you expect the people to cling to?” And Martin Luther looks at him in the movie and says, “Christ. Jesus Christ.” And I tell you, it’s the best thing Hollywood has ever done. It’s absolutely great scene. You need to see it.

Justification by faith is truly one of the great doctrines that was recovered in the Reformation; justification by faith. A person is declared righteous by faith. That’s an amazing concept. You are given salvation, not on works, not on law-keeping, but on the basis of faith. It’s revolutionary. And Martin Luther, in God’s great kindness, uncovered that doctrine in his study of Scripture. It’s a little bit like – remember in Josiah’s day when the Law, the Torah had been lost, it had been forgotten, it had been buried, and one day during young Josiah’s reign, the king, the scribes discover the Law. And they were like, “Wow, what’s this?” The gospel had been hidden, it had been covered, and Martin Luther dug it up and he said, “Look at this.” And we have been heirs of it ever since. We are heirs of the Reformation. Man is saved by faith.

Another byproduct of the Reformation is what I call the recovery and the renewed emphasis upon the transcendency of God. Transcendency is such an important concept for us to understand about God. God is transcendent. The problem when you get away from Scripture and you get into spirituality—God is in the trees, God is in me, but when you get back into the Bible, when you get back into what the Bible says, God is transcendent. He is infinitely wholly other than we are. We cannot see Him, we cannot touch Him, we cannot argue with Him. We cannot meet God; He is transcendent. He is completely other than we are. And once you begin to see that, and I’ve said this many times from the pulpit and to people, it was in the Doctrines of Grace, as I began to see how truly great God was, I feel like I met God for the first time. I felt like God truly became God to me. And it was the first time in my known life when I came to

understand reformational theology, I literally got down on my knees and on my face before God. He's God. He is infinitely beyond anything I had ever understood before.

Once you begin to understand the transcendency of God, that He is beyond us completely, the imminence of God is amazing. What is the imminence of God? That He is near, He is active, He is involved in our day-to-day lives. That's almost paradoxical, how can a transcendent God that you cannot see, you cannot interact with, you cannot grasp hold of be imminent, be so close, so involved? And yet that's exactly how the Bible presents who God is.

I'd like you to turn in your Bibles to 1 Samuel chapter 16, because in this particular text of Scripture we are going to see the imminence of the transcendent God. We are going to see the nearness of a God who is so far away. We are going to see the intricate, personal, intimate dealings of a God who is wholly beyond our ability to comprehend or experience. We are going to see in (1 Samuel 16:1-7) the imminence of the transcendent God. When I say, "imminence" please understand I'm talking about His intimate knowledge of you, His involvement in your life. We will see in 1st Samuel 16 the imminence of the transcendent God.

We're going to just cover the first seven verses this evening. But in these seven verses, and I'll read them as I go through my points here, there is one word that is very prominent in this entire text. It is the word, "to see" or "to look;" *ra'ah* in Hebrew. It's listed five times in these seven verses, *ra'ah* – to see, to look, to perceive. In 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 16 we are looking at the God who sees. That's what we are seeing in 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 16. The God who sees, and it's not an accident that in the first book, Genesis chapter 16, one of the names of the Lord, of Yahweh, is *El Roi*, the God who sees. Hagar, pregnant, has just been driven from Sarah, her master. She's pregnant in the wilderness. She thinks she's going to die, and the Lord comes to meet her in her affliction, and He begins to minister to her and comfort her and protect her, and Hagar says in (Genesis 16:13), "She called the name of Yahweh, *El Roi*, the God who sees. The God who paid attention to me, who looked upon me in my distress.

Well in 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 16 we are going to see the God who sees; and it comes at a very pivotal point in the life of Israel and in the prophet Samuel. And I think as we recognize and look ourselves at the God who sees, it will become a very pivotal point in our life, no matter where we're at, or

what we're doing, we are dealing with a God who sees. A God who looks closely at what's going on. And so we're going to kind of unpack what this text says about a God who sees.

This particular passage here, these first 7 verses is dealing primarily with Samuel and the Lord. They're the primary characters. There are certainly other people involved in this story. There is the nation of Israel, there is the elders of Bethlehem as we will see, there is Jesse the Bethlehemite, the father of David, his sons. And then of course there is yet the unnamed king. This is about the anointing of David the king. These are all characters that are involved, but they're kind of like extras in a movie set. They fill in the background but the camera is on the Lord and on Samuel. The Lord is dealing with Samuel here and He is going to reveal to Samuel His covenant faithfulness to Israel, and at the same time He's going to be dealing with Samuel himself. He's going to be dealing with some struggles that Samuel is going through, some inadequacies that Samuel himself has.

You see the Lord is about to reveal His faithfulness to Israel. Israel is in some dark days. We're looking here at the God who sees; we're looking at the imminence of God. And what we see and find here is that the Lord isn't just interested in the nation of Israel. He's actually dealing with the man Samuel as much as anything in this text. And we think of a transcendent God who is big; we think, yeah, He may be involved with presidents and nations, but He's not. He's intimately involved in individuals. And as we think of our situation, the Lord loves the church and the Lord is concerned about the church, and involved in the church, but He's also involved intimately in the lives of the individual members of the church. And so the Lord here is dealing with Samuel as He declares His covenant faithfulness.

Let me just share a little bit of background with 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 16. I mentioned already that the background of the book of Samuel is really a background that is shrouded in just darkness, failure. There is the failure of the nation of Israel. If you want to turn back and look at a few – I'd just like you to see this, 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel chapter 8 you find the failure of the nation of Israel in that they wanted a king, just like the rest of the nations.

1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 8. Ironically in this text we also discover even some of Samuel's own failures as a prophet. Samuel is about to die and Israel begins to fret about the political vacuum that's going

to take place upon Samuel's death and they say, "Your sons do not walk in your ways." Verse 3 says, "The sons of Samuel did not walk in his ways but turned aside after gain. They took bribes and they perverted justice." As far as saints, Samuel was probably one of the most godly men in Israel, and yet what a tragedy. His sons did not follow after him. I don't know why that is. You find reality many times in Scripture. You find that reality even godly men, and their sons don't follow in their ways. Is it a great sin of the father, or is it a great sin of the sons? Is it God just showing the grandeur and the mercy of electing love? Do you just think you're going to be born to godly parents and you're somehow going to seep their genes and be godly? Or is it just a demonstration of sovereign, electing love – God chooses some in the family and just lets the others go away? I don't know. But it's a sad commentary that Samuel's sons turned aside and they did not follow in his ways.

And so Samuel's about to die, Israel begins to fret about the political vacuum, and they want a king. But their desire for a king was an affront to God. The Lord said to Samuel, "Obey the voice of the people," verse 7, "for they have not rejected you but they have rejected Me from being king over them." Their demand to have an earthly king was just a blatant rejection of Yahweh as their one true heavenly king. You're not good enough...we want a king! It wasn't just having a king, because they would solve the problem. The king would be the co-regent with Yahweh, he would rule with the Lord. But they were rejecting the Lord as their king. They wanted an earthly king.

So we find Israel has failed, and we look in the following chapters; they do get their king. Saul is anointed king, and in chapter 9 and 10 he has a few quick victories over the Ammonites and kind of consolidates his power. Everything looks wonderful in the land of Israel. Everybody's all excited, but it is going to be a short-lived joy. Saul makes some rash vows and he loses the dynasty. 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel chapter 12 I want you to see this because Samuel makes a parting address, his farewell address. He obviously thinks his death is imminent. He reminds them of the great sin that they did in choosing, demanding a king.

In 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel chapter 12 he speaks of all the evil. Verse 16, "Now therefore stand still and see this great thing that the Lord will do. Is it not the wheat harvest today?" Verse 17, "I will call upon the Lord, that He may send thunder and rain. And you shall know and see that your

wickedness is great, which you have done in the sight of the Lord, in asking for yourselves a king.' So Samuel called upon the Lord, and the Lord sent thunder and rain that day, and all the people greatly feared the Lord and Samuel." They realized that what they had done was an affront to the Lord. They had offended God.

Samuel does pray for them, but I think verse 22 is such a pivotal verse, maybe for the whole book. They begin to experience remorse, but notice what Samuel says in verse 22. "For the Lord will not forsake his people, for His great name's sake, because it has pleased the Lord to make you a people for Himself." You have sinned against the Lord. You have rejected Me. But the Lord will not forsake His people. That really becomes a pivotal verse for Samuel.

If you turn just a few chapters over, 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 15, it records the demise of Saul's reign. Saul is rejected as king because he blatantly disregarded, blatantly disobeyed the Lord's command. He was disqualified from being a co-ruler with Yahweh, an earthly ruler, and the kingdom is taken from him. That's all of chapter 15. The Lord rejects Saul from being king. And really the chapter ends of up very dark. Verse 34 and 35, Saul goes his way, Samuel goes his way and verse 35 says, "And Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death, but Samuel grieved over Saul. And the Lord regretted that He had made Saul king over Israel." It's a dark day in Israel. Samuel is even closer to the day of his death, Saul has proven a failure, there is nobody on the horizon. There is no political leader, no spiritual leader. Samuel is grieving, and he's grieving deeply over Saul, over the people of Israel.

Thus we come to chapter 16. There are three, what I would call distinct scenes in these verses, and each scene to me expresses a unique facet of what it means to have a God who sees. The first scene is in verse 1 where the Lord deals specifically with Samuel, the second scene is in verses 2-5, where Samuel obeys the Lord and goes and meets the elders of Bethlehem and Jesse and his sons, and then the last scene is in verses 6 and 7. Again the Lord and Samuel are in that scene.

Let's read verse 1 and look at one unique facet of what it means to have a God who sees. "The Lord said to Samuel, 'How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go. I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I

have provided for Myself a king among his sons.’” These are obviously very dark days for Samuel. He is undergoing extreme mourning, we can call it depression. He’s out of it. In one sense you may say, “Why Samuel? You’re about to die. You’re getting old; just forget about it.” Why is he so upset? Because he cares for Israel, and he sees what’s happening in the nation, and he sees what’s happening among God’s people, and it grieves him, and it doesn’t look good.

But the Lord interrupts Samuel’s mourning. “How long? How long will you grieve over Saul? What are you doing? Enough is enough. Get up. Fill your horn for I have provided for Myself a king among his sons.” I want you to see the word “provided” because that is the first occurrence of the word, *ra’ha*. Literally it can be translated, “I have seen for Myself a king.” I have seen for Myself a king. I have provided for Myself a king. In this text as we will see, everything that is about to happen, happens because of Divine initiative. Samuel is almost paralyzed because of grief, because of sorrow. The Lord comes, He says, “What are you doing, get your horn, fill it up. I have provided for Myself a king. I have seen a king for Israel; get up and go.” And the whole text is moved by Yahweh’s initiative.

His excessive grief is interrupted. “It’s enough. Samuel, stop.” Samuel had forgotten his own words. He’s mourning, everything is black, everything is dark to him. But he has forgotten his own words. What did he say in 12:22? “The Lord will not forsake His people.” The welfare of the nation, the welfare of God’s people does not rest upon Saul, it will not rest upon you, Samuel. It rests upon the Lord Himself. “I will take care of My people, Samuel. Stop grieving. This is excessive. You’ve gone too far. Stop grieving.”

We find the God who sees is faithfully watching over the welfare of His people. That’s the point that I want to make at first. When we say, what does it mean to have a God who sees? To have a God who sees is to have a God who is faithfully watching over the welfare of His people. Samuel’s discouraged. It’s a very dismal day in Israel, but God will not forsake His people. He has provided for Himself a king. He is faithfully watching over His people.

When I see Samuel mourning, I see his excessive grief, his what we can call his “disproportionate pessimism,” I can’t help but think of Christians today. I’ve been around enough. You watch the news; you see what’s going on politically. You hear about things that could happen, and it’s not

good news. It's not good news at all; it's frankly discouraging, depressing. And I don't think it's unkind or unfair to say, many Christians I think are suffering from extreme pessimism. You look at the church and things aren't much better in the church. Somebody was just talking to me again about some things that are going on in the church and you think, what's going on? This is not good.

I was thinking of just even some of the great spiritual leaders that we so appreciate, we listen to and we read and we go to their conferences: John MacArthur, and R. C. Sproul and John Piper. You know what's interesting about all these guys? They're getting old. All of them are getting old. Something's going to happen to them soon, sometime. We just saw the video from R. C. Sproul. Man that was taken a long time ago cause he's young in that video, cause he's not that good looking now. He's an old man. But the question is, who's going to take their place? I don't see anybody in the wings. John MacArthur, the influence that he's had upon the church, upon my life, it's been unparalleled. What happens when these guys are gone?

Look at what's going on in the church, and I'm telling you, look at what's going on in the nation, and I'm telling you it's easy to have excessive pessimism, to be really discouraged. And we need to hear again what it means to have a God who sees. To have a God who sees means He is faithfully watching over the welfare of His people, and the welfare of His people isn't dependent upon John MacArthur or John Piper. It's not dependent upon any church or any political leader. God Himself ensures the welfare of His people. That's our confidence. That's where the Lord comes to us and says, "Hey, the pessimism has gone far enough. Stop it. Is My throne frustrated?" Absolutely not.

The welfare of the church of Jesus Christ doesn't depend on any one man or any church, it depends on Jesus Christ Himself. I take this to heart for our church. 2009 has been a tough year for Faith Community Church. There's a lot of things that haven't gone on in 2009. A lot of discouraging things. The Lord says to me, "What's the excessive negativism for? What are you so distraught for? Who's church is this?" If this is a church built upon the gospel of Jesus Christ, Jesus said, "Not even the gates of hell will prevail against it." Get up and keep going. The welfare of the church is ensured by Jesus Christ and not by me, not by us, not by anyone on this planet, but by Jesus Christ Himself. That's what it means to have a God who sees. A God who is

faithfully watching over the welfare of His people and He says, "I have provided for Myself a king. My people aren't going anywhere, Samuel. Enough is enough."

Verses 2 through 5 we see another aspect of the God who sees. Not only is He faithfully watching over the welfare of His people, but (2) we see here the God who sees is faithfully working all things according to the counsel of His will. A God who sees is a God who is intimately involved in our life, faithfully, actively working all things according to the counsels of His will. Now, let me show you how I got that. This is kind of a strange few verses.

Verse 2 Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears it, he will kill me." Now, Samuel's a godly man. Samuel has walked close with the Lord. Why is he so – he's about to die anyway. Why is he so reluctant to do this? That's strange enough, but what is even more perplexing is what happens next. And the Lord said, "Take a heifer with you and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.' And invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do. And you shall anoint for Me him whom I declare to you." It's like the Lord accommodates Samuel's fears. That is so strange to me. This is the omnipotent God of the universe who delivered His people from the land of Egypt and they never even picked up a sword. I mean He destroyed the super-power, and here Samuel's afraid of Saul and the Lord says, "Here, let Me give you a cover, go get a heifer, and if they ask you, just say you've come to sacrifice." Does the sovereign Lord of the universe, does He have to resort to subterfuge to protect Samuel here? What's going on?

I'll show you what's going on, because it is quite remarkable what's going on. In verse 4 Samuel meets the elders and they are afraid. They are very aware of the rift that has come between Samuel and Saul. "'Do you come in peace?' And he said, 'Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. Consecrate yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice.'" And he consecrated Jesse and his sons and he invited them to the sacrifice.

What we see is the Lord working out a perfect plan here. Do you see the word "consecrate" right there, consecrate yourselves? This is an amazing move on the part of God. The elders of Bethlehem come and they meet him, Jesse and his sons, and he says, "I have come to sacrifice, here's my heifer. I want you to come to the sacrifice, but you need to consecrate yourselves." Do you know what consecration was? I looked this up in Hebrew grammar. To consecrate

yourself is to decidedly dedicate yourself to the service and loyalty to Yahweh. You go through this ceremony and you dedicate yourself wholly again to the Lord, to serving Him, and to be loyal to Yahweh. Then you participate in the sacrifice.

Do you understand what's going on here? These are the elders of the city. I don't think they have any clue what they are dedicating. "We will be loyal to You, Yahweh." Really? If you're going to be loyal to Yahweh, then you're going to have to be loyal to the one Yahweh anoints to be king. These people are put exactly in the perfect political... "we going to be loyal to Yahweh." Well guess what? Yahweh is about to anoint a new king, and if you're going to be loyal to Yahweh, you'll have to be loyal to this man. What looked to be just subterfuge, deception, camouflage, is God sovereignly working out, working among the elders in Bethlehem to do His will, which is to install His king.

To have a God who sees – is a God who is faithfully working all things out according to the counsels of His will. Do you understand what that means for you? Do you understand what that means for us as a church? The God who sees, the God who is intimately and actively involved in your life, is working in the affairs of your life, even those that seem happenstance or misfortune. He is working in the affairs, sovereignly working all that out for your good, according to the counsel of His will. The God who sees, this transcendent God is working in your life. Things are happening, you don't even know what He's doing, but He is working sovereignly, just as He worked in Samuel. "OK, here's a cover for you, take a sacrifice, but Yahweh has a plan. I'm going to bring the elders of Israel and I have a sacrifice. They are going to consecrate themselves to Me and I'm going to reveal to them My king. And I will begin to build political support for My king David." So God is sovereignly working in these affairs, as God sovereignly works in our affairs.

Do you have a God who sees? Do you believe that? I was just thinking of some of the different trials and struggles that people are going through that I'm aware of, and there's many I'm not even aware of. Do you know you have a God who sees? A God who is not perplexed. That He is weaving together a perfect pattern. Someday you may wake up and say, "Unbelievable what God has done." That's what it means to have a God who sees.

There's one other facet and this is where we'll close tonight. It's in verse 6 and 7, and it's really the lynch pin. The sons of Jesse all come together. They are going to be paraded before Samuel, and the Lord is going to reveal to Samuel the one He has chosen to be king. Verse 6, "When they came, he looked on Eliab and he thought, 'Surely the Lord's anointed is before him.'" There's the second word *ra'ha*, when they came he, Samuel, looked; *ra'ha* on Eliab and he thought, "Surely the Lord's anointed is before him."

But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look" – here's a different word. It's more of the idea, don't gaze upon this, don't look on his appearances or on the height of his stature because I have rejected him. And then here's the four different occasions. For the Lord sees (*ra'ha*) not as man (*ra'ha*) sees. Man looks (*ra'ha*) on the outward appearance, but Yahweh looks on the heart. To have a God who sees is to have a God who looks intimately into the heart of man, and He sees what's in the heart of people.

This is the one, and there's many things, but this is one distinct separation between God and man. We cannot look into people's hearts, but God can. And all throughout Scripture this is the one thing God constantly attributes to Himself. "I am the Lord, I search the hearts and minds. I alone." It's all throughout Scripture. (1 Kings 8:39) Solomon is praying, "You alone, Lord, know the hearts of men." (1 Chronicles 28) "You search the heart and understand all the imaginations of the mind." (Jeremiah 17:10) "I the Lord search the heart." When the apostles prayed in (Acts 1:24), they're trying to choose replacements for disciples because of Judas. They pray and they say, "And You Lord, You know the hearts of all."

God sees the heart. He sees the inner man. There's so much irony here, what's going on. I guess the inadequacies of Samuel are being displayed most prominent in this text because Samuel basically falls prey to the common lot of all humans. Samuel is not looking rightly upon Eliab. Samuel is looking the way man (*Adam*) looks. Which is an irony because you know what Samuel is called in 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 9? He's called a "seer" – a "seer" - one who sees divine things. That was the name of the prophets. They called them seers because they could see divine things. And here is the prophet of God, the seer, and he's not looking rightly. He's looking like men look. He's looking on the outward appearances, just like we often do.

We look at the pretty face. We look at the handsome smile, the tall stature, the weight, the complexion, the clothes, the car. We look at all these external things and make internal assessments. That's what it means to "judge not." It doesn't mean you don't deal with people's sin, it means you look at people externally and make internal assessments. But you don't know. But God looks at the heart. God looks at the inner man.

I just want you to look at verse 7 again if you will. "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him." Verse 1 said, "I have seen a king for Myself." Earlier on in chapter 13, after Saul had already been rejected by the Lord, 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 13, "Saul, your kingdom will not continue. The Lord has sought out a man after His own heart." The Lord's eyes were going to and fro the land of Israel and saw hearts of men. And He chose one who would be king. He came and he saw Eliab before him and Samuel goes, "Oh, that's the guy. He is so 'kingly.'" And the Lord goes, "No. You're looking on the outward. I am looking on the heart, and as I look on the heart, I have rejected him."

Man, that's heavy stuff. I've seen the heart of Eliab, and that's not what I want. Which means, we don't know who is going to be anointed yet – it comes in a few verses, but David. He's not even in the initial line-up. He's so young that he's out keeping sheep. They don't even think about calling David. I am suggesting to you that David very likely might have been 12 years old at this time. I don't think that's far fetched. I don't think David was much more than 15 or 16 when he went to fight Goliath. We don't know for sure. They call him a youth. But the point of this text is, "Call your sons together." He calls them all, seven, and he doesn't even think about David. He's keeping the sheep. He's looking at Eliab – there's a tall, handsome – he's got to be it. "No, I have rejected him. I have seen his heart." And finally when David is brought before him – that is the one. "I have seen his heart." This is very, very deep stuff.

I want to talk to us reformation people, those of us that know doctrine, those of us that believe in sovereignty and election and total depravity and all those big words, and we say, yeah, we believe it – God is sovereign, God is controlling everything, man is totally depraved. I want to just back up for a minute, and I'm going to say this, that if your belief in these great doctrines, if your belief in the sovereignty of God, the total depravity, election, any of those things – if your belief in those doctrines in any way diminish or alleviate personal responsibility, you have

miscarried theology. Because the Bible never does that. The Bible never presents men as robots going around doing what God says, "I can't do anything...just do what God does. It's all we can do." The Bible presents men as wholly responsible for their actions, for their hearts, for what they do. And all throughout Scripture when you open the pages of Scripture (Proverbs 4:23), "Keep your heart with all diligence for from it flow the issues of life." And I love this (Proverbs 23:19) a father to his son, "Hear my son and be wise. Direct your heart in the way." You are responsible for the upkeep of the heart.

The sovereignty of God never eliminates personal responsibility. There's all kinds of things going on here that I don't know about. But I believe, more than anything, we have a responsibility to preach the whole counsel of God, and not just the parts we really like to hear. And this is a text of Scripture that says God looked down and He saw Eliab and He says, "Nope, that's not who I'm looking for." And He looked down and He saw David and He said, "That is the heart that I want." There's no mention of, "Oh, I put that heart in him." It is completely, this naked text, it's just very real. I've seen his heart, that's the man I want.

I'm passionate about this because I've seen way too many people get infected with, they call it "hyper Calvinism." It becomes a fatalism, "Oh, God is sovereign. I pray. God is sovereign, we don't need to witness. God is sovereign, He is going to save who He is going to save. God is sovereign, if I'm saved, I'm saved." And they live and they are careless and they are unholy and they are worldly. It's a miscarriage of theology.

Many people think a lot like a guy that I once counseled. He was really struggling with sin. It was one of those besetting sins. But I was dealing with him and there wasn't a lot of fighting going on. I don't know how else to say it. And he said to me, "Well, I figure when the Lord wants me to stop, He's going to take it away from me." Buzz...wrong answer. You don't wait for the gift of repentance. You repent. You don't wait for the gift of faith, you trust and believe. You don't wait, "Oh well, God's going to have to do it." You do what He commands.

What was it that the Lord saw in David? What was it that the Lord saw in David? I don't think it was sinlessness, because that would go against Scripture. Scripture says everyone has sinned. I think David was a normal boy. I don't think it was necessarily a super-righteousness. What was

it in the heart of David that won the approval of God? And I really think there's only one answer to that. There's only one answer, and I think we can find that answer. If you go to chapter 17 you can read about David. But the answer—what the Lord saw in David was a vibrant, active confidence, faith in Yahweh. I believe in this story we have a perfect demonstration of justification by faith. We have an illustration of what Hebrews 11 says, "By faith men of old gained their approval." By faith.

God looked down upon the heart of David and He saw a young man who really believed in Him and relied upon Him and trusted Him. And we see it evidenced in 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 17. David stands before Saul and he wants to go fight Goliath. "You're just a kid." "Oh yeah, well I was a shepherd and Yahweh delivered me from the paw of a lion and the bear, and I'll tell you what. He can deliver me from that stinking giant." He didn't use those exact words. And he gets out on the field with Goliath and he says, "I want this assembly to know that Yahweh doesn't need spears or swords to win victories. The battle is the Lord's and Yahweh will help me defeat you."

That is the heart of David. He is a man who trusted, believed in, was reliant upon the Lord. He gained the approval of God simply by faith. Just like Abraham; just like we can. The God who sees. What does He see in your heart? We can say with our lips we believe. Do you trust in the Lord Jesus Christ? Do you believe and rely and have confidence in Jesus Christ? The Bible says that is the one approved by God. It's amazing reality, truth.

I'm going to close, but I just want to speak to our young people this evening – juniors, seniors, sophomores, freshmen, sixth graders, 12 year olds, 14 year olds – I already mentioned I believe every indication we have is that what transpires in 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 16, David is a very young man, a young boy, 12 years old. Just because you're 14 or 12, don't think you're off the radar of God's screen. He sees your hearts. What does He see? Do you have an active, confident trust in the Lord Jesus Christ? Listen, do have an active, confident trust in the Lord Jesus Christ? I fear we often don't see that. Young men, young women, the Lord knows the heart.

You know as I thought of this reality, of the God who sees, the God who sees the heart, it reminded me again, that is exactly why we need a Savior. If it was just the outward stuff, many of us could probably get by with the skin of our teeth. But if God looks at the heart, we

are all damned unless we have a Savior. And that's exactly who we have – a Savior. Have you gained the approval of God? By faith, in Christ alone. Let's pray.

*Father, I thank You for this example. I am reminded of how important it is to cultivate the heart. We will be careful not to judge others based upon their looks, on tattoos, on haircuts, on dresses, clothes. We would remember that the Lord looks upon the heart. Father as we are reminded tonight, You are a God who sees. You will faithfully take care of us, Your people. At the end of the day when are unfaithful, we can only come back confidently believing that You alone are faithful to Your covenant, and to Your people. You will be faithfully working in our lives, everything for good, according to the counsels of your will. That You are the God who sees our heart, and You desire that we place our absolute faith and confidence in You and gain Your approval. Bless this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

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·Faith Community Church

·3500 NE Prather Road

·Kansas City, MO 64116

·[www.faithcommunity.com](http://www.faithcommunity.com)