**July 18, 2021 1 Samuel 16:1-13**

***The Pothole of Popularity***

**Scripture:** 1 Samuel 16:1-13 NRSV

*(1)The LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons." (2)Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears of 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)Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name 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)He said, "Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice." And he sanctified 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 now before the LORD." (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 does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart." (8)Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. He said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one." (9)Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one." (10)Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen any of these." (11)Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here." (12)He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. The LORD said, "Rise and anoint him; for this is the one." (13)Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.*

**Notes:**

1. Samuel was ***distraught*** over ***Saul’s*** failure to God.
   1. I am sending you to find the very king I ***want***.
   2. Samuel had ***concerns*** that ***Saul*** would find out
   3. ***God*** knows exactly what is going to happen,
   4. So, ***Samuel*** did as he was told.
2. Quit ***Worrying***.
   1. ***Worry*** begins when we are inactive.
   2. ***Worry*** turns into fear.
   3. ***Worry*** is contagious.
   4. How can we destroy worry? Get in the ***battle***.
3. Quit ***Assuming***.
   1. Don’t ***assume*** God is going to follow our traditions.
   2. Don’t ***assume*** God will see the situation as we see it.
   3. Seek God’s ***guidance*** before choosing to do something.
   4. ***Continue*** on until God gives you an ***answer***.
4. Make the wise choice of ***waiting*** on God to guide you.
   1. ***Wait*** on God to guide you;
   2. When He does make his will known, ***obey***.
   3. Who are you going to ***follow***; Man or God?

**Script:**

I like to watch and observe people’s actions and reactions. Last week as I sat at the Car show in the prayer tent, I observed many people as they walked by. Some of these people were oblivious to our tent and us in it. Others would walk by and wave at us, some gave us a wave, others gave us a thumbs-up. Then there are the teenagers who walk by and strut around as if they were the coolest people in the world. Don’t get me wrong I do not intend to be critical of them or how they are acting, but I am guilty of acting that way myself. I acted that way because I wanted to be seen as cool, I wanted to be accepted and maybe even be envied by others. I wanted to be seen as someone I wanted to be; yet I did not feel that I was.

We all have a desire to be liked, a desire to be accepted, and many times it is flattering when others want to be like us. It compliments who we are and how we like to be seen. Many times we worry about how we will be seen by others. We worry about how others will think about us. We see this in our personal lives but also in our spiritual walk. Let me say that our personal lives and our spiritual walk must be the same.

Many times, we worry so much about what others think about us that we fail to focus on what the Lord has called us to do; and when we are not focused on our mission, we fail to do what we are called to do and act in the that God tells us. As I have said many times we must be walking in the light of the Lord and representing Jesus in all that we do, when we are in public and when we are in private. Obviously, we should be demonstrating our faith because we know that many people will see us and our actions and judge our faith by those actions. But we must demonstrate our faith in private because you never know who may see us in private. We also must be practicing our faith in private because how we act in private will also affect the way we act in public. Today we are turning from the current king of Israel, Saul; and turning to the future king. Turn with me to our sermon passage for today, 1 Samuel 16:1-13.

*1 Samuel 16:1-13 NRSV (1)The LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons." (2)Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears of 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)Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name 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)He said, "Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice." And he sanctified 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 now before the LORD." (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 does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart." (8)Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. He said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one." (9)Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one." (10)Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen any of these." (11)Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here." (12)He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. The LORD said, "Rise and anoint him; for this is the one." (13)Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah*.

Obviously, Samuel was distraught over Saul’s failure to God as King of Israel. As we read the opening line of our passage today, we can assume that Samuel had been grieving over Saul for some time. Perhaps he felt he was somehow responsible for Saul’s shortcomings. Perhaps he was in mourning for the nation, after all they were the ones who rejected God, and asked to have a king put in charge over them. So the Lord tells Samuel, “Stop your moping, get over Saul because my mind is made up, he is out. Fill up your flask with oil and travel to Bethlehem, I am sending you to Jesse; there you will find the very king I want among his sons.”

Samuel had concerns that Saul would find out and there would be trouble, fearing that Saul would kill himself, and possibly even the future king. Sometimes we do not hear clearly because we worry about appearances. God knows exactly what is going to happen, and if we do what the Lord says we are bound to do His will, obstacles will be overcome and problems would be solved. This case is no different, the Lord tells Samuel to take a heifer along with you and announce that you are going to offer a sacrifice to the Lord. Samuel is told to make sure Jesse and his sons are there for this sacrifice; and trust in the Lord that when the time comes, he will know what to do. So, Samuel did as he was told.

The elders of Bethlehem were shaken when Samuel arrives, apparently his reputation precedes him. The town fathers meet Samuel before he enters town and asks him if there is something wrong. So Samuel plays it cool and tells them what the Lord said, that he had come to worship the Lord and offer the heifer as a sacrifice. Samuel also made sure that Jesse and his sons were there for the meeting. How, you may ask, did he do that without drawing attention to his goal, by having the feast after the sacrifice was offered would be at Jesse’s home.

As Jesse’s sons enter for the meal, Samuel is intent on watching each of them and listening for God’s direction. Each of Jesse’s sons had traits that Samuel thought were admirable and would be good candidates for the future king; but, the Lord told Samuel, “*Looks aren't everything. Don't be impressed with his looks and stature. I've already eliminated him. GOD judges persons differently than humans do. Men and women look at the face; GOD looks into the heart.*” Each time another son would enter God would let Samuel know, “*no, not this one.*” After what seemed to be the last of Jesse’s sons entered, Samuel asks Jesse, “*Are all of your sons here*.” And Jesse replied, “…*all except the youngest who is out tending the sheep.*” Samuel stated that they will not sit down to eat until all of Jesse’s sons are present. So the youngest, David was summoned and as he entered the Lord told Samuel to, “*…rise and anoint Him; for this is the one*.” And Samuel obeyed, discreetly anointing David in the presence of his brothers, and the Spirit of the Lord came down upon David in a mighty way. I say discreetly because Samuel was still concerned about Saul finding out. I am under the impression that this was done in secret away from the other residents of Bethlehem. But David was anointed and again later when he is recognized publicly as the next to be crowned king.

I wonder what does this all have to do with the pothole of popularity? What can we learn from this? First we look at the words of God first and foremost. “(7)Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the LORD does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.” Think about this, we worry about what others think, we worry about what others will say, we worry about how we will be perceived. Quit Worrying. God is not concerned with appearances on the outside, but what we are truly like in our heart. He was looking for a king who would be conscious of what the Lord wants; not somebody who is swayed in the breeze of public opinion, constantly going back and forth and never really honest with themself.

In these verses we see the pattern of worry. Worry begins when we are inactive, when we are not busy, when we have too much time to think about what everybody else will be thinking. Samuel was moping around, crying about Saul and what he had done. All of his worry and mourning was not going to change a thing. It was not going to change what had happened, it was not going to change God’s decision to remove Saul from power, nor was it going to affect God’s choice for the next king; and it was not going to help God’s people to move forward.

Worry turns into fear. Samuel didn’t want to do anything because he was convinced that Saul would kill him and I am certain, even though it doesn’t say so, that He was afraid that Saul would retaliate against God’s choice for his replacement. But as I said before, if God tells you to do something he will make a way for you to successfully complete the task.

Worry is contagious. Samuel was worried about Saul and his reactions to what Samuel would be doing under God’s direction. The elders of Bethlehem were afraid of what Samuel was coming to town for. Worry has a bad reputation for paralyzing those who are called to do great things. In the worries of what might happen, we forget the true nature of our command to go forth and declare victory in the name of the Lord.

We must learn how to destroy worry, but how is that possibly done? The enemy is not visible, the enemy in in our mind and imagination. How can we destroy worry? By getting up and becoming active, do not sit on the sidelines of the battle, get involved. There are so any things that may be done, but if we do not become active we will have way too much time to sit around dwelling upon all of the negative possibilities.

Another way to avoid the potholes of popular opinion is to quit assuming. Do not assume, especially do not assume the worst possible scenarios. Do not assume that God is going to continuously do things the way that he always has. Don’t assume that God is going to follow our traditions. The tradition during the time of this passage was that the first born would receive a double portion of the inheritance and also that the first-born son of the king would become the next king. Do not assume that God is going to see the situation in front of us as we see it. Remember there are three sides to every situation, our side, their side, and God’s side which is right. We look at the outside, but God looks at the heart.

We would be wise to put our assuming ways to death. One way to do this is to seek God before choosing to do something that may be considered hasty. When we make rash decisions, many times we do not give the Lord time to work. We fail to consider what the Lord would have us do and so our hasty decisions and actions usually makes things worse.

Also when the Lord sends you in one direction, continue traveling in that direction until God directs you to go in a different direction. Continue on until God gives you an answer. Samuel looked at Jesse’s sons one by one until all that were present entered. But God did not give him the oky for any of these sons; so, Samuel asked Jesse if he had any other sons. Only the runt said Jesse. Samuel could have chosen one of the sons present, but he did not get the nod from God, so he knew there had to be more. After Jesse told Samuel about David, Samuel said they would not begin util David arrived. Continue on until God gives you an answer.

Many times, in our quest for popularity, we do not wait on the Lord to help us and direct our decisions. We base our decisions upon what is popular in your circle of friends. You choose to do things based upon the opinions of those around us. We base our decisions upon worldly desires. We base our desires upon the pothole of popularity. As soon as God told Samuel that this is the one, then God instructed Samuel to anoint him as king.

Do you find yourself in the mix of trying to live a Godly life in an influential world? Do you find your decisions are influenced by the norms of your friends and neighbors; by the popular ideas and desires of the day in which we live. Do you find yourself being led by the ideas of the many in your community rather than making the wise choice of waiting on God to guide you.

Wait on God to guide you; wait on his direction and open doors. Don’t make your decisions based upon popular opinion. But when the Lord does answer, when He does make his will known, obey. As we look at the norms of our society today, we find that many things that are considered sinful, and our society not only accepts it, but also encourages it. When you watch Television or a movie, be aware of the way these forms of entertainment are trying to get you to accept life decisions and situations that are sinful and found to be an abomination in the sight of God. There will be times when we know what the Lord wants us to do, but we won’t do it because it is not popular. So what? Who are you going to follow; Man or God?