

Samuel 16:6-13
1st Sunday after the Epiphany of our Lord
January 10, 2010

1 Samuel 16:6-13 (New International Version)

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.

Most names have a meaning. Do you know what your name means? The name Joshua means "the Lord saves." The name Jonathan means "Gift of God." The name Sarah means "princess." Do you know what the name David means? It means "beloved of God." When one thinks of the Old Testament believer David, that surely is a fitting name. David was loved by God and David loved God.

Regardless of whether your name is Billy, Sally, Sue, or Shane all of us could be called "David" because all of us are "beloved of God." That's the thought we want to consider today. On this first Sunday after the Epiphany of our Lord, we are reminded that just as God the Father said at Jesus' baptism, "This is my beloved Son," so also he says to us, "You too are **Beloved of the Lord!**" Let us **I. Rely on the evidence of that love, II. Recognize the effects of that love!**

YOU ARE BELOVED OF THE LORD!

I. The evidence of his love

II. The effects of his love

As we hear these words about David being anointed king, we are to remember that the Old Testament is salvation history. In other words, all that is recorded for us in Scripture is information that God wanted us to have to know how he controlled history to serve his purposes of sending us a Savior. Certainly, this is a big chapter in that history. In having David anointed as king, God was not only choosing a man to replace Saul, he was choosing a man through whose line the Savior would come. And that Savior did come through David's line just as God said, for Jesus was born in the town of David and was of the lineage of David. Jesus is king David's greater Son. We marvel at the power of God to carry out his plan of salvation to the minutest detail!

But there is more for us to learn. In choosing David as king we see the mercy and grace of God at work. Why did God choose David? Was it because he was bigger, more handsome, more powerful than his brothers? No, Samuel thought the others certainly looked more kingly. Did God choose David because he was more holy than his brothers? Certainly not. For

David did some pretty sinful things in his life. He stole a man's wife, committed adultery with her, and then murdered her husband to cover it up. Then why did God choose David to be King and ancestor of the Savior? Let's read it again, "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 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.'"

The reason God chose David to be king is the same reason he chose us to be his own! It wasn't because of any good thing in us or any good that we do because we all deserve to go to hell. He chose David to be king and he chose us to be saved because of his love that we don't deserve! That's beautifully explained for us in the second reading: "4 But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy."

The big question is "How can we know that we are truly loved by God?" We especially ask that question when difficult days come or when we daily fall into sin and our consciences scream at us "God can't love someone as sinful as you." When we have such days, where are we going to find evidence that we are still loved by God? What evidence did David have that he was still the chosen of God and loved by him even when he fell into sin, or when others tried to kill him, or when two of his sons died and his family life was just one big mess? The evidence was not only in the promises of God but also in the anointing that he had received. That oil poured out on his head was a visible symbol to David and to all "This is God's chosen one, David, the beloved of the Lord."

So it is for us. Whenever we have doubts about God's love, don't look at outward things, but go back to where God has given you the evidence. Where is that? That was answered in the second reading too. "He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life." Yes, God tells us he loves us in his Word, but don't forget that in your baptism, which is also an anointing by the Lord, God said to you, to the world, to the Devil " "This one is mine."

Yes, you are beloved of the Lord! As you live and especially when you die, rely on the evidence God gave you in the Scriptures and also in your baptism!

II.

But there is more. When God poured out his love on us in baptism, that wasn't just evidence of his love, that outpouring, anointing had some amazing effects.

Let's first consider David again. When he was anointed the Holy Spirit came upon him with power, and from that day on things changed for him in this life and the life to come. His status changed. He was no longer just a shepherd boy, he was chosen by God to be king and shepherd of God's people. And he did that work! As a redeemed child of God he loved to hear the Word of God, even the psalms God used him to write. Although he was not allowed to build the Temple for the Lord, he saw to it that the gifts were there for his son Solomon to build it. When he faced death itself, he knew that heaven was his home. It was David who wrote in the 23rd Psalm "Even though I walk the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil. For you are with me... Goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." These are just a few examples of the effects of God's saving love in David's life.

So it is with you. Think of what God did when he poured out his love on you in baptism. The Holy Spirit came upon you with power, and there were big changes in your life. Your status changed before God. In baptism God identified you as one of his redeemed. In baptism he forgave you your sins and there he wrote your name in the book of life. There he put faith in your heart to receive all those blessings. No matter how long or short you live in this world, God will never take back those blessings. They can only be lost if you reject them in unbelief.

But there is more. Just as God set David apart as king to serve the Lord and others, God set you apart to serve him and others with your life too. No, none of you has been anointed as a king of Israel, but in your baptism God set you apart as sons and daughters of the King of kings. Like David he set you apart to serve. No matter where God has placed you in life, as a husband or wife, father or mother, son or daughter, worker or student, you desire to serve, not yourself, but the Lord and others! And think of the biggest effect of all--heaven. Yes, like David, you too can face death with confidence because you recognize that through what Jesus did, you too shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever. These are just a few of the saving effects of God's love in your lives. Recognize them and we rejoice in them.

But does it work? Does relying on the evidence and recognizing the effects of God's love really help us while we live and when we die? Let me share with you an experience I had just this past week. An elderly woman's husband died. The couple had fallen away from church and had no pastor. A friend asked if she would like a pastor to visit her. She said "yes." So I went. Visiting with her, I could see the pain, sorrow, and fear in her eyes regarding her husband's death as well as her pending death. As we visited I learned that she had been baptized in a Christian church years ago. We talked about what her baptism meant and she even recited John 3:16 with me. When I told her that what God promised her in her baptism, namely the forgiveness of sins and eternal life, and that those promises still stood, you could see the comfort and relief in her eyes. In the grief of losing her husband she found joy in being a "David," beloved of the Lord. The evidence of that love was her anointing at her baptism. So dear friends, as we go on in this new year, always know that in Christ, each of you is a David--beloved of God. Rely on the evidence God gives of that love in your baptism. Recognize that that love does have saving effects in your life, and rejoice in them. Amen