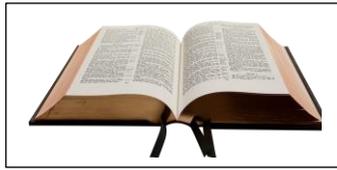


## **Coop's Scoops # 211 Sunday Sermon and Prayers June 13 2021**



**Quietly accept the message planted in your hearts; it can bring you salvation.**

**(James 1: 21)**

**Readings: 1 Samuel 16: 1-13 Psalm 46 2 Corinthians 5: 6-10, 14-17**

**16** 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."<sup>[a]</sup> **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.

## **The Holy Gospel: Mark 4: 26-45**

<sup>26</sup> He also said, "The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, <sup>27</sup> and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. <sup>28</sup> The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. <sup>29</sup> But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come."

<sup>30</sup> He also said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? <sup>31</sup> It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; <sup>32</sup> yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."

<sup>33</sup> With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; <sup>34</sup> he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.



### **Sermon:**

We have a big job as Christians. World changing in fact. We are called to grow and grow and grow until all the nations of the world can find their rest in Christ. To grow just like the little mustard seed that would only, by its nature, become a bush YET with the power of God grew beyond "normal" to become the giant tree in which all the birds of the air could nest. It is God's plan and Jesus' prayer that everyone come into the Kingdom. Our own little mustard seed of faith is to grow and grow until it provides shelter, safety, and sanctuary for others in need of Jesus. God's plan is to reach all people through the likes of us, and He has revealed no back up plan to date. So we

need leaders. We need growers. We need lovers. We need thinkers. We need “giants” to be role models for us, to help us to live in and grow the Kingdom of God on earth. Who might they be?

Now that’s a good question. Who are your role models for Kingdom growing? I love to claim for myself people like Desmond Tutu, Henri Nouwen, Bishop N.T. Wright, or every Bishop under whom I have served including Archbishop +Anne, as well as a homeless man I met in Toronto, a young Ojibway boy, my own grandmother, and lots of parishioners. In our celebrity obsessed culture, power and influence seem to belong to people like Beyonce, Oprah, Drake, Dr. Phil, Ariana Grande or Justin Bieber. I mean no disrespect to these people. Sometimes they are awesome. And sometimes they are not. Just like us. Not always paragons of virtue. Bottom line? Who do we want our children and our grandchildren to look up to and admire? Does the Bible give us any guidelines to help us identify who Kingdom-builders look like? Most certainly “yes”.

Which leads me to the wonderful account of David’s selection as King. This story tells us first of all that humanity’s bias toward the pretty, the popular, and the privileged is nothing new. Samuel has been sent by God to find a son of Jesse to replace the corrupt King Saul. The eldest son, Eliab, (that’s the position of privilege) is led before him and Samuel thinks “this has to be the guy...look at him would you.” And God says these very key words “do not look on his appearance or the height of his stature...**I do not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but I look upon the heart**”. The rest of the charming and no doubt quite suitable sons pass before Samuel and not one of them is “the one”. David, the youngest, the one who wasn’t even special enough to be invited to join them at the sacrifice, the one who is ruddy from the outdoor weather, the one who is a bit dirty and disheveled out on the grasses tending sheep - that one is chosen by God. The least likely. And interestingly, David too was handsome and had beautiful eyes. God does not prefer the pretty or the plain –being pretty or plain doesn’t qualify you or disqualify you- it is absolutely immaterial. What God considers is the heart.

And what kind of heart did David have? Well, one which caused him to be an obedient child, and hardworking youth. One which also held within it lust and treachery. One which could love with utter adoration and murder with seeming impunity. Perfection and absolute purity of heart was obviously not required by God. The beauty of

David's heart was found in his willingness to bow, to repent, to accept correction, to be humble. The beauty of David's heart was a contrite and loving spirit. David's love ran deep. That is what makes him such a wonderful role model for us and for our children's children to all generations. David was real. Courageous or frightened, full of the Spirit or cowering in caves. David didn't pretend. He was real.

The first little parable in our Gospel is a great comfort to all who can't imagine they could ever be a righteous role model or a Kingdom grower! This comforting truth is that we, in ourselves, can't...but with God all things are possible... and so we can. It is He who puts the Holy Spirit into our hearts to transform us. The seed of new life is planted in us, we do what **we** can, then God's power adds what **He** can do, and the result is making mustard seeds into huge sheltering trees. Then when the harvest comes, it will be the Kingdom of God, more and more fully upon the earth.

From King David thousands of years ago and from those we trust as leaders today we can be sure that:

1/ No one is perfect apart from Christ. If we expect ourselves or others to be perfect, we will be disappointed. Sooner or later, we let each other down. Then, love calls for mercy.

2/ Our judgement of others is usually flawed because we see through a very limited human filter. We often do not see or even look for "the inner heart" of others when we are angry or hurt. Jesus did tell us in Matthew 7: 1-3 not to judge ( Matthew 7: 1-3) , not because there is nothing to judge, but rather because we so often judge wrongly. In all cases, holy judgement requires both mercy and accountability.

3/ We learn from others best by not idolizing their biggest success and not demonizing their biggest failure, but by watching the qualities of their hearts over the long term. Do we see love and mercy? Then they are Kingdom builders.

The only absolutely totally reliable and trustworthy "being" in the entire universe is God. King David came to know this personally and deeply, as he wrote in this morning's psalm:

***Some put their trust in chariots and some in horses, but we will call upon the name of the Lord our God.*** Amen. He alone is holy!

### **Prayers:**

God of freedom, whether we like to admit it or not, we do not treat everybody with equality. We silently **judge others** based on appearance, social status, education, position and race. Forgive us for our false judgements and missed opportunities to love. Please give us the courage to go out of our way to meet **others** who are not inside our usual social circles so that we may learn from them, serve them, and partner with them to bless our world.

O Lord, our Creator, by your prophet you taught your ancient people to seek the welfare of the cities in which they live. We commend our neighbourhood to your care, that it might be kept free from social strife and decay. Give us strength of purpose and concern for others, that we may create here a community of justice and peace where your will may be done; through Jesus Christ our Lord . Amen

( please pray this prayer not only for Bracebridge and our surrounding towns, but also for the people of the city of London as they endeavour to restore peace and build unity following the tragic murders of the Afzaal family, along with prayers for nine year old survivor Fayez, recovering in hospital)

### **Blessing:**

The Lord bless and keep you. The Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you. May you walk humbly in love and peace in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen.

- Judie+