



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

1 Samuel 16:1-11

“The Calling of David”

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] We thank Thee Lord for the Scriptures and especially for the way in which they ministry to our spiritual needs. We thank Thee for the men of the Old Testament who have left their testimony with us. And we thank Thee particularly for David and for the way in which Thou didst use him. We thank Thee for the way in which the Holy Spirit brought him into this human scene and illustrated through him so many of the things that have to do with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Enable us as we consider the life of David to learn from him the things that may be helpful to us. We especially pray Lord that, if it should please Thee, we too may be as he, men and women after God's own heart. We now ask Thy blessing upon us as we study together in this hour. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] Tonight is the first in our series of studies on the life of David, and I'm asking you, if you will, to turn with me to 1 Samuel chapter 16, and the subject for tonight is the call of David, 1 Samuel chapter 16, and in a moment we'll read some of the verses of the chapter.

If one were to ask the question, “Why study the life of David?” there would be two things particularly that would immediately come to mind, I’m sure, that make the study of the life of this man a desirable thing. In the first place, he is probably one of the most outstanding, if not the outstanding, type of our Lord Jesus Christ. His very name means, “beloved,” or “the beloved one,” and so in that respect he, particularly, is representative of the Lord Jesus. David was born in Bethlehem, and the Lord Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem. David was chosen of God. The Scriptures also say with reference to our Lord Jesus that he too was the elect, or chosen, one of God. David grew up in the quietness of his own particular shepherd life. The Lord Jesus also grew up in the quietness of his life as the carpenter. David was anointed by the spirit and entered into his ministry as king through the anointing of the spirit. The Lord Jesus began his Messianic ministry having been anointed by the Holy Spirit. David reigned in Jerusalem, and of course, our Lord Jesus Christ is to reign in Jerusalem. There are many other ways in which David is illustrative of the Lord Jesus as well. And I’ve just picked out some that have come to mind very quickly. So, when we think of David, we think of the one who is David’s greater son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The second reason that makes the study of the life of David a desirable thing is that he was a man after God’s own heart. Looking back at chapter 13 and verse 14 of 1 Samuel we read, “But now your kingdom shall not endure The LORD has sought out for Himself a man after His own heart, and the LORD has appointed him as ruler over His people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded him.” In Acts chapter 13 and verse 22 in the New Testament we have another word concerning David of a similar kind. We read there, “And after he had removed him, he raised up David to be their king; concerning whom he also testified and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My heart, who shall do all My will.”

So, David was a man after the Lord’s own heart, and for those of us who would like to be men and women after God’s own heart, the study of David should be

particularly rewarding and instructive for us. It's possible that a man like Abraham excelled David in faith because when we think of Abraham we think of the great exemplar of faith. He was the great man of faith, and he is the one who is used as the illustration of faith in the New Testament. Probably Elijah excelled him in forcefulness because Elijah was the prophet of fire, and no doubt some could make a good case for Moses excelling him in communion with the Lord. But when you look at David as a versatile man, it's probably doubtful that any of these men excelled David in versatility for he was a man who had numerous talents and gifts given him by God. He was a man of faith. He was a forceful man. He was a warrior. He also was a man who spent a great deal of time in fellowship and communion with the Lord. And so he's a well rounded man of God.

Now, if you were looking at David's life from the standpoint of a school and you wanted an outline of his life, you could probably say that his life might be divided into these parts: first of all, in his early life, he served as a shepherd, as a harper, and as a champion; and then in the middle stages of his life, he was a courtier, that is he served Saul in the court of the kingdom in Jerusalem, and spent a great deal of his time as an outlaw, being searched for by Saul; and then of course, the latter part of his life was the life that he lived as king. So that there is the early life of the shepherd, then the middle life of the outlaw, and finally the royal life which consumed, of course, the great part of his ministry.

We're looking tonight at the call of David or the choice of David as king, and so let's turn now to 1 Samuel 16, and will you listen as I read the first 11 verses.

“Now 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 selected a king for myself among his sons.’ But Samuel said, ‘How can I go? When 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.’ ‘You shall invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall anoint for Me the one whom I designate to you.’ So Samuel did what the LORD said, and came to Bethlehem and the elders of the city came trembling to meet him and said, ‘Do you come in peace?’”

Now that seems rather strange, and so I think I need to make just a comment about that. “The elders of the city came trembling,” now the reason for that is that Samuel was a judge, and of course, when Samuel came to a city, very frequently he came because some crime had been committed or some decision had to be made concerning a crime. And so when Samuel was seen coming to a village, it was possible that something was wrong there, and so they came trembling wondering what it was that brought Samuel to the place, and so they said, “Do you come in peace,” or is it because you have come as judge, you have something against us and now we are going to have to carry out some legal proceedings? “He said, “In peace; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Consecrate yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.” He also consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.” Then it came about, now evidently the sacrifice was announced and then there would be a little bit of time because they would have to go out and get the animal and slay the animal and prepare the animal for all that was to be done with it, and so, now the next verse, verse 6, has to do with some things that took place, evidently in Jesse’s house, evidently, while things were being prepared for the sacrifice and the feast that would followed. “Then it came about when they entered, (that is probably into Jesse’s home) he looked at Eliab and thought, ‘Surely the LORD’S anointed is before Him.’”

Now Eliab evidently was a man of unusual stature, probably a handsome man, a large man, the kind of man that Saul was. He was taller than any of the men of in Israel, a mighty impressive looking man, Saul had been. And evidently, Eliab was something like that. “But the LORD said to Samuel, ‘Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his

stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.’ Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, ‘Neither has the LORD chosen this one.’ Next Jesse made Shammah pass by,” or Shaammah.

I always think that was one of the first dogs that I ever had after I was a Christian. I think the first one after I was a Christian, we named him Shaammah because Shaammah means “to guard.” And consequently, a man who knew Hebrew told me I ought to name my dog Shaamah so I named him Shaammah. And that’s what he said. I didn’t know Hebrew at the time. So, here is a man named like a dog I guess. [Laughter] Next, I see the logic does not escape you.

“Next Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, ‘Neither had the LORD chosen this one.’” Incidentally our dog was a little fox terrier and it was not a very good guard. [Laughter] Verse 10, “Thus Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. But Samuel said to Jesse, ‘The LORD has not chosen these.’ And Samuel said to Jesse, ‘Are these all the children?’ And he said, ‘There remains yet the youngest, and behold, he is tending the sheep.’ Then Samuel said to Jesse, ‘Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here.” Now let’s turn back to the first verse, and I want you to notice the word, “mourn.” “How long will you grieve over Saul? The Lord said to Samuel.”

Now Saul was an unusual character. Bible students often wonder, “Was Saul really a believer? Was he really a carnal Christian or was he not a Christian at all?” Books have been written on the life of Saul, a man of tremendous potential, but of course, who made an outstanding failure of his life. He evidently was a very likeable man. He certainly was an impressive looking man, very handsome, very large, very tall, and in addition he was a very modest man. He was not a braggart, not a conceded man. He was unassuming. But he had all the failures of a weak man, but Samuel loved him. And it’s clear that even though the Lord had rejected Saul; there was a great deal of love in

Samuel’s heart for him. “How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel?”

Now the rejected is interesting because it raises questions about why Saul was rejected. Well we know from the standpoint of history itself, he was rejected because he hastily offered, when Samuel told him not to offer an offering. And thus, he rebelled against the Lord in so doing, and then he also was responsible for a very rash vow against Jonathan, his son. And finally, if we were to sum up all of the occasions for the anger of God against Saul, we would have to mention the fact that he failed to destroy Agag and the spoils. And back in chapter 15 verse 18 and 19 and verses 22 through 28, we have an account of this, and I’d like to read verses 22 through 28 of chapter 15. So turn back to the preceding chapter and listen to what is written there.

“Samuel said, ‘Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has also rejected you from being king.’ Then Saul said to Samuel, ‘I have sinned; I have indeed transgressed the command of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and listened to their voice. Now therefore, please pardon my sin and return with me, that I may worship the LORD.’ But Samuel said to Saul, ‘I will not return with you; for you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel.’ As Samuel turned to go, Saul seized the edge of his robe, and it tore. So Samuel said to him, ‘The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to your neighbor, who is better than you.’”

So, ultimately, it came down to the question of obedience. Someone has said, “Don’t sacrifice the permanent on the altar of the immediate.” And that was the mistake

that Saul made. He could not wait for Samuel to come and offer the offering, and consequently he sacrificed his whole career by disobeying the words that had been spoken to him. Someone has also said, “The greatest ability is dependability,” and in spiritual things there is a great deal of truth in that. And Saul was the kind of man who was impatient and impetuous and as a result of it, disobedient to the Lord and as a result he was rejected from being king.

In a sense when you look at Saul and then you look at David you can say, “Well now Saul is the impressive kind of man that we all would have been impressed by. Saul is man’s man.” But David is God’s man, and all the difference in the world lies between the two. One of them may look to be very impressive as far as men are concerned, but the other is the man upon whom God has set his affection.

The Lord said to Samuel, “How long will you grieve?” Go ahead, “Fill your horn with oil.” I’ve already selected a king, and Samuel said, “How can I go? When Saul hears of it, he will kill me,” because this would be an act of rebellion against a king. So Saul might regard his actions as treason. But the Lord, in effect, says, Samuel you are to obey. You are not to question, and when Samuel says he’s going to kill me, the Lord said, “Take a heifer with you and say, ‘I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.’”

That’s very interesting because that raises the question. Was Samuel asked to exercise duplicity? Was he really to lie? When they said, “Why have you come?” was he to say, “Well I’ve come to sacrifice when really he’s come to anoint a new king?” Well I think probably the proper answer to this is it’s not always duplicity when you don’t tell everything that you know. He had come to offer sacrifice. It was not duplicity. And furthermore, David was not being anointed as a king now, but he was being anointed in virtue of the fact that God was going to give him the kingdom in the future. And so he’s told simply by the Lord well, “Take a heifer with you and say, ‘I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.’”

Well when he arrives, he makes known his mission, and as a result of this in Jesse's house the sons of Jesse are asked to appear before him. Notice the response that Samuel makes to the first of the sons, Eliab. He says, “Surely the LORD'S anointed is before Him,” when Eliab, the oldest son, is brought out before him. Isn't it interesting how often man's judgment is faulty. The reason is simply this. Man cannot see what is inside a man's heart, and furthermore he cannot interpret what he does see accurately. Eliab looked like just the kind of man who could be a king over Israel, but he was not the man upon whom God had set hand. If you were to choose men, you might choose the Eliab's and pass by the David's, just as we've seen in our study of Genesis.

If it were a matter of human choice between Jacob and Esau, the one who was the mother's boy and the other the strong outdoor man, many of us, no doubt would have thought surely God's hand is upon Esau rather than upon Jacob. If we were to look at Luther and Erasmus, our choice of Luther would probably not be so strong as evidently was the choice of God upon him because Erasmus was the scholar. He was the well traveled cosmopolitan kind of character. On the other hand, Luther was a gruff, outspoken, German professor and the hand of God was upon Luther and not upon Erasmus. If we were to look about us today we probably wouldn't pick the men who are used of God. We'd rather choose others. I think the tendency in evangelicalism is to choose a scholar as over against a man whom God has just laid his hand to preach the word. It's doubtful that we would have chosen a Billy Graham to be used in evangelism in this country. We'd rather pick some professor in a theological seminary.

But, of course, God's choices are not our choices, and in this case, as well as in others, the choice lies with God and sometimes it's surprising. Of course the greatest surprise of all is the choice of our Lord Jesus Christ, the stone which the builders rejected. That stone has been made the head of the corner. Someone has said, “If you will give God your heart, he will comb all of the kinks out of your head.” And the meaning of that

in the context was that if your heart is right before the Lord, he will give you all that's necessary up here to be the kind of servant that he wants you to be.

Well, finally, all of the seven sons are past before Samuel and at each occasion says it's not that one. It's not that one. And finally when the seven have gone by and still God has said it's not this one, Samuel says, “Are these all?” And he says well there's one. He's the young boy and he's out tending the sheep. He's the youngest.

Incidentally, he is the eighth. And as you know in the biblical language of numbers, seven is the number of perfection, and eight is the number of a new beginning or the number of the resurrection. So it's very fitting I think that David should be the eighth. Later on, by the way, in case someone comes and mentions this text, later on reference is made to the seven sons of Jesse when there really were eight. Evidently one of the sons died relatively young, and so when the genealogy is given, only seven are mentioned. But there were eight sons, and David is the eighth, and he's the youngest. And he is out tending the sheep. And Samuel recognized evidently that this must therefore be the one and so he says, “Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here.” In other words, he'll not sit down for the feast until David has come. He's recognized through the testimony of the Holy Spirit that it is David who is chosen.

Now let's read verses 12 and 13 in which we have the anointing of David.

“So he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, with beautiful eyes and a handsome appearance and the LORD said, ‘Arise, anoint him; for this is he.’ Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. And Samuel arose and went to Ramah.”

Well, let's look at some of the things that are said about David here. First of all, it says that he was “ruddy.” That means he was red haired. That's what the word means.

He had red hair. Now, the red hair and the fair skin was a special mark of beauty in the orient because as you know from looking at the television screen, in the Orient to have red hair and fair skin is rather exceptional. Most men there are dark and sallow faced. And so, consequently, to find a man like this in the midst of that type is rather unusual. When it says here also that he had a beautiful, some of you have the Authorized Version, and it says he had a “beautiful countenance.” Now we read here, “He was ruddy, with beautiful eyes and a handsome appearance.” But it’s the eyes that are marked out as being beautiful. So David was a person who had red hair, evidently a countenance, a fair skin and his eyes were strikingly beautiful.

Now the last description that is given of him in that verse is a rather general one, “and a handsome appearance.” That is, he was goodly to look at. In other words, he was a kind of a male Sarah, or a male Rachel. So he was a very handsome man, a young man, red hair, fair skin, beautiful eyes. What would you say ladies? Very attractive ladies, not like Khomeini. [Laughter] He looks kind of sallow faced to me. [Laughter]

Now we read in verse 13 that he was anointed, “Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers.” Now to anoint, of course, means to anoint in the sense of to make a Messiah. To anoint is simply to “mashach”, “to make a Messiah.” So he was anointed. That is it was an act which marked him out as a king. Now anointing was done with prophets, priests, and kings. So when we speak about the Messiah it means an anointed one, and consequently he’s anointed for the particularly tasks that God has him to do, prophet, priest, king, the prophet, to give the message of God, the priest, to offer the sacrifice, and the king to rule over the realm. So he was anointed. You wonder if the people understood what was really happening. Did the family of Jesse understand that when Samuel anointed him that he was really being anointed to be king over Israel? Nothing is said about that here, and it’s probably doubtful that Samuel did say something about it because it would have been regarded as an act of treason. So it’s possible, and many commentators think probably, that those that

were gathered in Jesse's house thought that what was happening was that Samuel was selecting him for service in Samuel's school.

Now we know from certain things in the story concerning David that he did study under Samuel. He spent a great deal of time under Samuel. In fact it's possible that the greatest work that Samuel ever did was in the training of David. So they may have thought that he was simply being selected by Samuel for his school. That was his crowning work. And David was his crowning achievement. Most feel that he spent a great deal of time with Samuel, and therefore was prepared by Samuel for the tasks that were before him.

The Scripture says, “And the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward.” Now that's an interesting statement and I think it requires just a little bit of analysis. As you know when you turn to the New Testament, you read in the New Testament that the Holy Spirit did not yet indwell anyone in a permanent way. For example, in John chapter 7 we have this, if you have your Bibles there turn to John chapter 7. Let me read a verse or two there to show what I'm speaking about. John chapter 7 and verse 37, the Lord Jesus,

“Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, stood and cried out, saying, ‘If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me,’ as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.’ But this (now John adds this) But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.”

Now the word “given” is supplied in my version the New American Standard Bible in verse 39. And that's a proper supply. That is, it's proper for the translators to supply because, of course, the Holy Spirit was in existence, but he “was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified.” So you can see from this statement that it's not true to say

that any of the saints of the Old Testament were ever permanently indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Otherwise, we have a contradiction with the apostle’s statement here.

This is confirmed by other statements made in the Gospel of John. Let me read chapter 14 and verse 16 and 17. The Lord Jesus is speaking to the disciples in the upper room, and he says, “I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.” Notice the future, “And will be in you.” So in the days before the cross of Jesus Christ no believer was ever indwelt permanently by the Holy Spirit. The references in the Old Testament to the work of the Holy Spirit are not therefore to be interpreted as indwelling by the spirit.

Now some react negatively to this because they like to think that the Old Testament saints had the same position before the Lord as New Testament saints, but the New Testament makes very plain that there is this striking difference between the saints of the Old Testament. They were not permanently indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

Now then, but what about those statements in the Old Testament in which it is said that the Holy Spirit was in certain people, for example, some of those that constructed the tabernacle, when Gideon carried out his work against the Midianites? The statement is made that the Holy Spirit clothed himself with Gideon. And there are one or two other references in the Old Testament of a similar nature. Well if you’ll look carefully at the context of those passages, you will see that the reference is not to permanent indwelling, but to enduement with power for a special service.

So in the Old Testament men were in relationship to the Holy Spirit in such a way that the Holy Spirit used them for specific tasks. And in the case of those who constructed the tabernacle, like Bezalel and others, the Holy Spirit came upon them, worked in them while the tabernacle was being constructed, enabled them to construct that tabernacle according to the specifications that are set forth in the law of God. In the

case of Gideon, the same thing took place. The Lord moved into his life, took control of him and until he defeated the Midianites, he was with him. We know that later on Gideon's life turned into something of a failure.

And the same is true of others. In the case of David, we have a similar thing. We read here in verse 13, “And the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward,” not in David, not permanently indwelling him, but “came upon him” in order that he might carry out his task as king which was reflective of the Messianic ministry of the Lord Jesus who was to come. That's why when the Lord Jesus also was baptized; the Holy Spirit came upon him in order that he might carry out his Messianic ministry, and so he was endued with power from the day of his baptism for the conduct of his Messianic ministry. And David here is illustrative of that. He now is anointed by Samuel. The Holy Spirit comes “mightily upon him,” for enduement with power.

No believer in the Old Testament times up to the time of the cross of Jesus Christ was permanently indwelt by the Holy Spirit. But after the cross every believer is permanently indwelt by the Holy Spirit as John chapter 14, verse 16 says the Lord Jesus said he would pray the father. “He will give us another comforter that he may be with us forever.” And so from the time of the cross on, when believers believe on the Lord Jesus Christ they are given the Holy Spirit as a permanent possession. And in fact, the test of Christianity becomes, “Do you have the Holy Spirit?” “He that hath not the spirit of Christ is none of his.”

So tonight I could say to you right in this audience, the test of your Christian life, the test of the possession of that life is do you have the Holy Spirit as a permanent indwelling person in your life? If you do not have the permanently indwelling Holy Spirit, you do not belong to the Lord God. “He that hath not the spirit of Christ is none of his.” Do you have him? Are you sure that the Holy Spirit indwells your life? You positive of that, do you have the conviction that there is something that has transpired, that has made your life different since the day you thought you exercised faith in the Lord Jesus Christ?

It's fair also for us to be able to see some manifestation of that in the lives of individuals. We're not ones to judge as he says here right in this chapter. Man looks on the outward. God looks on the heart. We cannot make any final decisions. But so far as the word of God is concerned there should be some evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers. “For he that hath not the spirit of Christ is none of his.”

So, this, then, is enduement with power, not permanent indwelling. So the Holy Spirit “came mightily upon David from that day forward,” and of course, the exploits of David are the product of the powerful Holy Spirit who was upon him from that time on. It was enduement with power. Now, of course, he was strengthened also for lots of other things. Not all of the acts of David were mighty acts of valor. The New Testament says the Holy Spirit has come upon us and is in our lives to strengthen us to such things as patience, and the other virtues of life. And the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, and etcetera. These are the things that are the products of the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Now we're introduced to Saul here again, verse 14 begins in the Authorized Version with “But,” now in this version, “Now.” “But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD terrorized him.” Now there are a number of years between verses 13 and 14 in chapter 16 here. And evidently these years were spent in the school of Samuel. It was during this time that David wrote the 8th Psalm, the 19th Psalm, probably the 23rd Psalm, the 29th Psalm, many commentators believe. So, now we have David's introduction to Saul. And so that is the purpose of this next section. So let me read beginning with verse 14.

“Now the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD terrorized him. Saul's servants then said to him, ‘Behold now, an evil spirit from God is terrorizing you. Let our lord now command your servants who are before you. Let them seek a man who is a skillful player on the harp; and it shall come about when the evil

spirit from God is on you, that he shall play the harp with his hand, and you will be well.’ So Saul said to his servants, ‘Provide for me now a man who can play well and bring him to me.’ Then one of the young men said, ‘Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite who is a skillful musician, a mighty man of valor, a warrior, one prudent in speech, and a handsome man; and the LORD is with him.”

Incidentally, you can tell from this that some years have passed between verse 13 and verse 14 because David is now known as a mighty man of valor, a warrior.

“So Saul sent messengers to Jesse and said, ‘Send me your son David who is with the flock.’ Jesse took a donkey loaded with bread and a jug of wine and a young goat. (It was not proper to come to a king without some gift in your hand. So he,) Took a donkey loaded with bread and a jug of wine and a young goat, and sent them to Saul by David his son. Then David came to Saul and attended him; (That is, he came into his court and stayed there, probably as an armor bearer and things like this. This incidentally, was preparation for David’s work as king.) And Saul loved him greatly, and he became his armor bearer. Saul sent to Jesse, saying, ‘Let David now stand before me, for he has found favor in my sight.’ So it came about whenever the evil spirit from God came to Saul, David would take the harp and play it with his hand; and Saul would be refreshed and be well, and the evil spirit would depart from him.”

Now isn't it interesting in verse 14 we read here, “Now the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD terrorized him,” terrified him. So Saul evidently was a man who was troubled with intense mental agony, and evidently this was because of sin and regret over his past actions. He really had become something of a hypochondriac. He was afflicted with depression just as hypochondriacs are, often centered on some imaginary physical ailment. The Jews called it “bad air” because the

devil was regarded as inhibiting the air around someone who was terrified like this. And so he was a man now who was very troubled, a hypochondriac because of his past.

So the servant said to him, “An evil spirit from God is terrorizing you.” Now, notice what the Scripture says, and what these people say. In verse 14 we read, “Now the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord,” notice that, “From the Lord,” now that’s what the Scripture says, “An evil spirit from the Lord.” But now notice what the people say in verse 16, “And it shall come about when the evil spirit from God is on you,” now there’s a difference. You see the Scripture says it was an evil spirit from the covenant keeping Jehovah, Yahweh. They evidently feel some uneasiness about saying that it’s really come from this covenant keep God. So they speak about an evil spirit from God. I found that every interesting.

And isn't it interesting too that it is said that this evil spirit comes from the Lord, from God. There are people who find it difficult to really believe that God is responsible for everything that transpires in his universe. They rather think that they must have some understanding of the Bible which makes God only a person who permits certain things to happen, but which really are not from him. In other words, they don't really have a sovereign God. But if it’s really true that God is sovereign, then all of the things in this universe come ultimately from him. And even in your use of the term permission, you have to acknowledge that, ultimately, things come from the Lord. This is an evil spirit from the Lord. There are occasions when it is perfectly proper and harmonious with the nature of God for him to send an evil spirit. Now, evidently in Saul’s case it was retribution because of his past actions, his disobedience. He hastily offered the sacrifice. He made a rash vow with reference to Jonathan. He did not obey hew Agag to pieces, and, consequently, as a result of his disobedience, there came a time when retribution was that which came from the Lord God.

Now there is nothing wrong in our saying biblically that God is the cause of sin, but not the author of sin. He is not the author of sin in the sense that sin comes from his

being for he is a holy God. But he is the cause of sin because he's the sovereign God. That is he determines that sin exists in his universe. And of course the greatest proof of this, if anyone needs proof who is a Bible reader, all you have to do is just read the Bible. If you just read the Bible through, you won't have any difficulty with this. The trouble is people don't read the Bible and they don't see the many cases in Scripture in which this is set forth, but if you'll just remember the cross of Jesus Christ you will see that it is God who is the one who has ordained that evil exists in his universe.

For the Lord Jesus Christ was offered up on Calvary's cross by the determinate council and foreknowledge of God. The greatest exhibition of sin in the history of the universe is the sin of Israel and the Gentiles and the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ. But Peter preaching says, “This man delivered up by the determinate plan and foreknowledge of God,” notice, “The predetermined plan,” that is the determination by God that Jesus Christ be the object of man's sin in his crucifixion. God is the cause of sin. Otherwise we have things happening in the universe that are not under his control, and then that kind of universe would be a universe in which nothing, absolutely nothing, could be certain and sure.

But God is not the author of sin. He is a holy being. Sin does not proceed out of his being. But you see there are things that are the result of sin that are greater goods, and as a result of the desire to have a greater good, God determines that evil exists. It's only thereby that we know that God is a gracious God, that he also is a just God. And the knowledge of the grace of God is only possible because he has determined that sin exists in his universe. And the knowledge that he is a holy and righteous and just God is only possible by virtue of the fact that he determined that sin exists.

So then we should not be surprised here, “An evil spirit from the Lord,” terrified Saul. It was part of the retributive judgment that was falling upon this man for his disobedience. So he was suffering intense mental agony because of sin and regret. Perhaps that's one of the reasons why we have so much mental sickness today. It's just

possible that a great deal of the mental sickness that is so common in our generation is the result of the exacerbation of the sense of separation from the Lord God.

Now for Saul the thing that was to sooth his nervous system was music. For us, well it's a little different. We use tranquilizers. For him it was music. For us it's valium. People live by valium today and various other kinds of tranquilizers. So someone suggested that what Saul needed was someone to play the harp. I wonder if that might help some people today, if we had some harpers around.

Incidentally, Seneca, in one of his works on anger, said that, “Pythagoras quieted the perturbations of his mind with a harp.” So, it's not simply a biblical remedy. So, Saul said, “Provide for me now a man who can play well,” and David, the son of Jesse, is the man. I want you to notice the description that is given of David that is given in that 18th verse. It's a seven fold description, and you know you couldn't think of anything better to have said about you than this. Could you men? In a sense, David is the kind of man who has all the keys of life hanging from his girdle. He has everything. He has put it all together. Some people think Roger Staubach has put it all together. [Laughter] Well he put it all together Sunday afternoon. Others think others have put it all together, Robert Redford or some financiers put it all together, some great political leader.

Listen to the things that are said about David. “Let our lord now command your servants who are before you. Let them seek a man who is a skillful player on the harp.” And then in verse 18, “Then one of the young men said, “Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite who is a skillful musician. (He learned that evidently playing on his harp out with the sheep in the pasture. He's) a mighty man of valor, (He's) a warrior, (He's) one prudent in speech.”

Now evidently Samuel taught him a lot of these things, and some even think that Samuel taught him his music, that they had music in the school. We don't know enough about that to be sure. But he was, “Prudent in speech.” And out of this training that he received we have the benefits of the Psalms for example, those beautiful Psalms that are

still magnificent expressions of the wedding of speech and spirituality. And he’s, “A handsome man,” and most of all, “The Lord is with him.”

Seven things said about him, skillful musician, mighty man of valor, warrior, one prudent in speech, a handsome man and the Lord is with him, and that’s the climatic one, and that’s the one that’s more important than anything else. “The Lord is with him.” Because let me tell you something men, if you didn't have any of the other things and you had that, you would have everything necessary because when the Lord is with a person, you can get by without a handsome face. You can get by without being a mighty man of valor. You didn't know I was a mighty man of valor, but my name Lewis means, “A mighty man of valor,” “mighty warrior.” Not everybody can have everything you understand. [Laughter] But the Lord is with him, how important that is, my dear Christian friend. The Lord was with him.

I don't know what is meant by this man of war. It may mean that he had help repel some Philistine rustlers because some time has intervened and then we know that in the 17th chapter which we’ll look at shortly, in the 17th chapter David makes reference to the fact that when a lion or bear came to attack that lambs of his flock, why he took them in his own bare hands and defeated them. So, he was a mighty man of valor and a man of war. But he also evidently had had some experience with Philistine rustlers as well. In verse 21 we read, “Then David came to Saul and attended him;” or stood before him. This, of course, meant that he was to serve Saul in the court, and this was preparation for his future court work.

Now, time is almost up. Let me just say a few words by way of some lessons that stand out from this opening chapter in the life of David. First of all, the thing that stands out is God’s ways are not our ways. In verse 6 and 7, that is expressed. The Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.” Over in Isaiah chapter 55 verses 8 and 9, I think it is; we

have a similar expression of thought. “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways,” declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.” That’s an important lesson for us to learn. It’s an important lesson in our own spiritual life. The thoughts that we are to have are the thoughts of God. The thoughts of God are the things that enable us to live the kind of life that is pleasing to the Lord.

It is also the thing to have in mind in the life of a local church. It is the teaching of the word of God that is to govern the activities of the assembly, not what we think might be good, but what do the Scriptures say concerning the life of the local church. So it is the Lord’s thoughts, not our thoughts, the Lord’s ways, not our ways that are to be the guides for us.

Now, the second thing that appears in this opening chapter is that God’s preparation is often in the quiet ways of life. David was the man of God’s choice, and what was he doing? Well the Scripture says in verse 11 he was doing the insignificant thing of tending the sheep, keeping the sheep, probably very few, but he was keeping the sheep. David’s superiority rested not because he was a lucky man, but because God had worked in grace. And while David was out with the sheep in the field, God was working in his heart, and as a result of what he did in his heart, he was training him for the days in which he would be Israel’s great king. To keep the sheep required certain virtues, and it was God who was governing and guiding his life so that these virtues were the natural products of his living day by day. The habits of vigilance belong to the shepherds for the shepherds had to care for the sheep. They had to feed the sheep. They had to see that they were in the right pasture. They had to protect them from the wild animals. They also had to deal with their sicknesses and accidents that happened to them. And so David, by tending the sheep, was taught habits of vigilance.

Later on, when he himself is responsible for things that have happened to the flock of God, grieved because they had to suffer for things that he did. David said, “Low

I have done wickedly but these sheep,” talking about people, “What have they done?” he said to the Lord. So those days, those many days, that he spent out tending the flock were days of preparation for him because he was going to be made the great shepherd of the flock of Israel, habits of vigilance. Those little experiences of life are often the experiences that fit us for the Lord’s work. Every one of us is a servant of the Lord and the experiences of life are designed to fit us for the things that he would have us do.

So he was taught vigilance there. He developed courage. As a result of having to deal with the bears and the lions, and the struggles that he had with them, he was taught valor. He had to be a man of courage. That’s why, later on, he can write, “Jehovah is my light and my salvation whom shall I fear?” He had been prepared in the experiences of life. And of course, he was taught habits of meditation. He was out alone with those sheep day after day, and the word of God was his meditation. In the night as he was lying upon the ground by his sheep, far away from his home, he would meditate on the Holy Spirit. In the 1st Psalm he speaks about meditating, night after night. So tending the sheep might seem to be a very insignificant occupation, but it was the thing that prepared him for the great work of shepherding the nation Israel.

And I think also of course we learn the awful results of God’s punitive justice because Saul is a person who, from disobedience, comes to madness and hatred, and ultimately to hostility to David himself. The causes, well the secret consciousness of sin, the knowledge of the loss of the goodly heritage that God had given to him, what magnificent possibilities seemed to reside in Saul. But he threw it all away because of disobedience. And also as a result of that he had fear of exposure, and he asked Samuel not to tell anyone about the things that had happened to him. Secret persistence in wrong, “I have sinned,” he says. It’s very easy for these expressions to come to Saul’s mouth, twice he said them. I read the passage, but it’s obvious he has no repentance.

In fact in the Bible isn’t it interesting that the men who say, “I have sinned,” include Pharaoh, but no repentance, Saul, “I have sinned, I have sinned,” no repentance?

Judas, “I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood,” but no repentance. The result is God gives them over to retributive justice. So, may those who began well then turn to indifference. Those who began well then allowed secret sin to take over. Those who had such rich possibilities then wasted them in head strong willfulness.

Remember the words of the man who said, “Behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly.” I think one of the greatest tragedies that happen in evangelicalism today is the tragedy of indifference to the things of the Lord. I guess as a teacher of the word of God that is the thing that troubles me more than anything else. It troubles me in my own life, and it troubles me as I look out and see those who have been sitting under the teaching of the word of God.

When I was in Switzerland just recently, in the home in which I was staying, I went up into the little room that they reserve for me. It's like a little prophet's chamber that these ladies, one is a widow, and one is an old maid, and I've stayed in their home a number of times. And they have it all fixed up for me in the sense that they reserve a room for me and another room for me to study in, and in this room there are a number of books that have been given them or that they have bought. They were two school teachers, and so they love books. I took out one of the books this time, a book of quotations from Christian men and was just thumbing through it, and I read a statement from F.B. Meyer in it which I had never seen or don't remember ever reading in Meyer though I've read a number of his works. He said, “I believe that if there is one thing which pierces the Master's heart with unutterable grief it is not the world's iniquity but the church's indifference.”

May God deliver us from indifference to the things of the Lord. And if there is indifference may he give us the sense of repentance and confession and then restoration. Let's close in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for these lessons from the life of the man after God’s own heart. Oh, Father, may we too be men and women after Thine own heart. For Jesus’ sake. Amen.