

# Week 1: David and the Crown

What's up church fam. My name is Marcus Williamson and I'm one of the pastors here at City Church. We are launching a new series today that I'm really excited about. It's on the life of David; and we will be hopping through the books of 1 and 2 Samuel, to see what we can glean from various points in David's life; and I would highly encourage you to read through those books as we go through this series. So if you have your Bibles go ahead and turn with me to **1 Samuel 16**.

And while you turn there let me go ahead and set us up for the rest of our time and for our series. So David, if you are unfamiliar, is a very celebrated person in the library of the scriptures. So much so that there are over 60 chapters in the Bible that refer to him. 60. To give you a reference point, Abraham, who God said He would build a nation out of, the Father Abraham who had many sons, is only mentioned in 14 chapters. Which is still a lot of chapters; and David gets 60. One scholar said that we have more biographical content on David than we have on any other ancient figure; not just in the Bible, but really anywhere an ancient figure is written about.

Now in light of that, I do want to say, that as we study David we will be looking at snapshots of his life instead of doing an in depth study in both books. Mostly because it would take us 4 years to get through as a church. And since we are already doing that with Matthew I'm sure you don't want that smoke.

Back to David though; two times in the scriptures, he gets referred to as a man after God's own heart. And as we go along in the story, he will also become a highly accomplished leader of Israel's army. Now Israel at the time was a very small group of people and over time they become a large group of people with quite a lot of power and sway in the world. And outside of God, that reality is based in large part because of David.

Like Eric said earlier, David also writes some of the most cherished poetry and songs that we have from all of ancient civilization. Which makes him a little bit of a category breaker for us. Like how many grizzled army vets do you know that are also highly skilled singer songwriters; able to write poetry that deeply expresses their thoughts and feelings and taps into the souls of others. This is David.

And in spite of all these things, that are wonderful, and all the ways God uses him for His glory, we're going to find that David has a very serious dark side. He's incredibly flawed. There's a mixture of character and integrity and talent, but also a sin nature, just like

everyone else who's ever lived, there's a mixture of godliness and brokenness. And the Bible hides none of it.

So ultimately, we are going to find out that David's life, much like our own, is *really* about God and God's ability to draw people into his plan. It's about the kinds of people that God uses and how he uses them, how he deals with people through their victories and their failures. And what we'll see with David, is that when he's humble and faithful, and simply does what God asks of him, things go really well for him and everyone else. But when he strikes out on his own, things start to break down piece by piece.

In other words, and this is really important, we are not studying David because David is a hero and we need to follow his example in that. Sometimes people tend to assume that all characters in the Bible, especially the more famous Old Testament characters, are great examples to follow. And sometimes they can be but hear me say there are some atrocious people in the Old Testament who God uses and works through as well. People who God blesses and God loves.

Which brings me to my point for us, the Bible is ultimately a story about how God is the hero and how we need a true example in Jesus. Spoiler alert, Jesus does what David actually could not, which is establish God's good and perfect reign and rule on planet earth.

So let me say out the gate, that as we study through the life of David, you'll find out fairly quickly that David is not the same hero you will remember when you were growing up. And at the same time, there is still plenty we can learn from him his life.

With all of that set up let's kick off 1 Samuel.

*1 The Lord said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king." 2 But Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears about it, he will kill me." 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 to do. You are to anoint for me the one I indicate."*

Let's stop right here. So this is around 1000 BC and Israel is made up of a small collection of 12 tribes. And they were led by leaders called judges. And these leaders would periodically deliver Israel from various outside threats and establish justice and the practice of the torah. Samuel, who the Lord is talking to, was both a judge and

prophet. Now a prophet was someone who God spoke through to the nation of Israel. So Samuel pulled double duty for the nation of Israel. He was functionally their leader and actually went on a circuit to various places helping govern the tribes. And after a long time of doing this he appointed his kids as leaders. And well, they don't do such a great job. So much so that in 1 Samuel 8, Israel asks Samuel to move on from this judge style government and establish a monarchy like the other nations have.

And Samuel is a little offended because he felt rejected by them, so he prays to God about what Israel was wanting. And God tells Samuel that they are actually rejecting God as king in their lives. The cultural pressure to have a king over them was too much for them to overcome, so God tells Samuel to let them have what they want. Sadly we don't have the time to dive into all of this, but it's an interesting story if you get the chance to read it. All that to say, we are picking up at the downfall of Israel's first appointed king, a guy named Saul. He was the type of guy that everybody wanted to be the king. He was the clear cut favorite amongst Israel. He was very tall. The Bible said he stood head and shoulders above everyone around him. He was charismatic. Good looking. A great warrior. He was a no. 1 draft pick kinda guy. Think the Rock but taller. So when he's selected to be king nobody is surprised.

In fact, they were very excited that Saul was going to be king. And it all starts out relatively well for them. He delivers the people from the hands of their enemies. The Spirit of God actually descends upon him early on in his kingship, so much so that he starts prophesying like all the other prophets. But eventually the power corrupts his heart. His soul becomes proud and self willed. He uses his position as king to serve himself rather than the people he was called to lead. He began to bend the laws of God to however it might serve him more. **Ultimately, we find that Saul has the tools but he doesn't have the heart. He's got all the talent in the world but not the character.**

And so the Bible says that God rejects Saul as king and he tells Samuel he needs to look for a new king. And that's where we are picking up. So God says to Samuel that he should go to Jesse because "I have chosen one of his sons to be king." And Samuel is like, but Lord, how can I go. If Saul hears about this, he will for sure kill me. And the Lord is like, "Fair, I got you, go ahead and take a heifer with you and say, I've come to sacrifice to the Lord and invite Jesse to the sacrifice. Then I will show you what to do; and you will anoint for me whom I declare to you." So as you can imagine it's not a good idea to go behind the king's back while he's still alive and anoint another king; that can get you killed real quick. So God provides cover for Samuel, in the way of customary sacrifice, so that he doesn't die at the hands of Saul. Verse 4:

*4 Samuel did what the Lord said. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled when they met him. They asked, "Do you come in peace?" 5 Samuel replied, "Yes, in peace; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. Consecrate yourselves and come to the sacrifice with me." Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice. 6 When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, "Surely the Lord's anointed stands here before the Lord."*

So Eliab is Jesse's firstborn son. And generally speaking, the oldest son back in the day is looked at as being the one who has the most prestige and power amongst the rest of the offspring and it helped that Eliab also looked kingly. Now don't miss what we are about to read in Verse 7, it's very important.

*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 people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the **[what church fam?] heart.**"*

Back in ancient times, physical stature and fighting abilities were a big deal in helping decide who was kingly and who was not. If you could beat everybody up in the room, then you deserved to be the one in charge. It was pretty black and white.

So when Samuel looks at the room he's like, ok, clearly here's our guy. He has the height, check, he has the looks, check, I'm sure he can hold his own in a fight, check. I think we got this one pretty much in the bag. Thanks for making this easy God. And God's like, well, here's the thing, all those things that y'all use as indicators, the outward appearance stuff, just go ahead and throw that out of the equation. I'm looking for a certain kind of **heart posture** for Israel's next king. Now when the Bible says heart here, it's talking about way more than just your emotions or feelings. To give you a picture, the Bible didn't really have a category for your brain and intellectually knowing things with it, so your heart became the center for knowing and understanding things. In the book of Proverbs, wisdom dwells in the heart. And your heart is what you use to discern between truth and error. And the Bible also shows many instances where you can feel with your heart. So fear, distress, depression, etc. And you can also have a heart of joy or have a heart that is glad. And lastly the heart is where you make choices based on desire. It's where your affections are centered. So the center of everything seemed to reside in your heart, hence passages like Proverbs 4:23 where the Psalmists says; *Guard your heart because from it flows your whole life.*

So Samuel assumes Eliab is the guy and God says nope. I'm not looking for externals. I need someone with the right heart posture. Verse 8:

*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. "He is tending the sheep."*

So notice, there is no scenario where Jesse thought that the youngest would ever be considered to be king because he was still tending the sheep. There was no chance that Jesse thought, maybe, I should bring along David. As sure as Samuel was about Eliab being King, that's how sure Jesse was about David *not* being king. And when Jesse says youngest, don't get it twisted, he wasn't just talking about age here, my dude was basically calling him a runt, or that David was inconsequential. He was keeping the sheep which was the lowest job you could have back then. This was a nobody doing the worst job out that nobody wanted to do.

*[So] Samuel said, "Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives." 12 So he sent for him and had him brought in. He was glowing with health and had a fine appearance and handsome features. Then the Lord said, "Rise and anoint him; this 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 powerfully upon David. Samuel then went to Ramah.*

So the writers of Samuel here want to tell us what's true about God and how God works. And what's true about David. So we need to pay attention to what's included and what's left out. And you're supposed to read this story, this historical narrative of David, and think this sounds pretty low key for an introduction to the greatest king in history. You're supposed to find it strange and unimpressive. I mean, even his own father didn't think highly enough of him to even have him even be considered a potential future king. And then he gets anointed in this secret ceremony and then he goes back to watching the sheep. It's not at all what you would anticipate. It's not how you set up a story arc in general. Or at least not how you would back in the day. So for the rest of our time, I'd love to talk about two ideas that I think we can look at as takeaways for us.

First:

**God uses unlikely people**

Look back at verse 7.

*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 people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”*

So in ancient times, the world always gave the oldest son all of the power and the most powerful men got the women they found most desirable, that’s just how it worked. But every place in the Bible where God works, he works in a way that reverses the world's values. This is a mega theme, especially in the Old Testament: God goes with the younger less impressive son.

It's Abel, not Cain. It's Isaac, not Ishmael. It's Jacob, not Esau. It's Moses, not Aaron. Or God goes with the unwanted woman, the old woman or the barren woman. So it's Sarah. It's Leah not Rachel. It's Hannah. It's Tamar. God always works with the woman that nobody seems to want and the son who is forgotten because God loves to use unlikely people.

We get even greater insight into the reality that God loves to use unlikely people with the coming of Jesus. Jesus was born in the middle of a nowhere town. He's raised in Nazareth, which was such a nothing place that when Jesus later meets Nathanael, Nathanael’s first reaction to meeting Jesus is, can anything good come from Nazareth. In other words, this guy cannot be the Messiah, the Savior of the world, he's not the right kind of person. He's just not the kind of person you'd have in mind if you're looking for a Promised Messiah.

So over and over and over again, the Bible is trying to show us that God doesn't think the way that you and I think. He just doesn't have the same categories that we have. He's always been about showing off how much wiser and how much more powerful he is.

And so in the New Testament, Paul talks about this idea from [1 Corinthians 1:26–30](#):

*26 Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. 27 But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. 28 God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, 29 so that no one may boast before him.*

So why did God pick David? Well it wasn't because he was strong or tall, or wise or rich or powerful, because David wasn't any of those things, at least not yet. God chose David to show off how wise and powerful *he was*. And while David eventually does become wise and powerful, he doesn't do it from his own strength. It's God's strength.

When Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed David in the midst of his brothers, the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon David from that day forward. The same David who was looked over for most of his life up til this point, was chosen by God to do extraordinary things. And it wasn't because David was extraordinary it was because God was and is extraordinary.

For followers of Jesus in the room, the beautiful news of the story of David is that if you care more of how you look on the inside than you do on the outside, and if you're willing to do whatever God tells you to do, whatever he prompts you to do through the Spirit, then you're exactly the kind of person that God loves to use. But even to get to that point I think we need to sit on one very basic question: **Do you expect God to use you?**

Don't let that hit you as a cliché. Don't just dismiss this because it seems like a simple question. I really want you to think about it. Do you genuinely expect God to use you to bless other people? To help other people? To make a difference in the world?

Married people in the room, do you expect God to use you in your spouse's life? To encourage them towards the Lord? To set up systems or rhythms to help them flourish? Or are you more likely to be surprised when it happens?

Do you expect God to use you in your lifegroup? Is that one of the reasons you participate in lifegroup? To actually be used by God to create an environment where you push others to the Lord? You know, sometimes I hear people say: "So I feel like I'm not getting anything out of my lifegroup." And to that point, your goal when committing to a lifegroup is not so that you can get something out of it, it's so you can give something to it. And the cool thing is that if everyone shows up with the goal for God to use them and give something, the byproduct is that we will all get something out of it.

Do you expect God to use you in your roommates' lives? Or are you just trying to not be bothered by too much? **I had a friend named Michael Cherry, he passed away a couple years back and was in our lifegroup, and one of the biggest reasons he wanted to have roommates in his house was so that this very idea would be lived out. He intentionally went out of his way to have weekly roommate nights so that he could be used by God to**

impact the people that he lived with. He never lost sight of the bigger goal. And even though he has passed, that legacy lives on in his roommates to this day. Because he expected God to use him to carry out his mission in this way, because he was faithful in this way, God is still using that for his glory.

Parents in the room. Do you expect God to use you in your kids' lives? I'm very thankful for our kids ministry that we are growing here and I'm thankful for all the volunteers that sing about Jesus, teach lessons about Jesus, try and help explain and nuance things about Jesus to our kids; but it's only for 2 hours tops, one day a week. So do you expect God to use you in your kids' lives as the primary disciplinemaker? Are we laying foundations in our lives so that they get a glimpse of who the Lord is. Are we setting up systems in our lives so that God can use us in our kids' lives? Or are we waiting for someone else to do it?

### **Do you expect God to use you?**

Takeaway number 2:

### **God uses unlikely processes.**

In our introduction to the greatest king in the nation of Israel's history, there is no celebration, there is no national ceremony; actually David wasn't even there. He was in the pasture while the hidden "ceremony" was taking place. Then he gets called up to get anointed, to only be sent back to the pasture. He doesn't go to the palace. He doesn't get a throne or crown. There's no official king training program he goes through. He just goes back to doing what he was doing. He goes back to watching the sheep. He goes back to the lowest job on the totem pole. But listen, **God uses the pasture to prepare the king.**

With those of you who are familiar with the story of David and Goliath, do you remember what gives David the courage and confidence to go out and fight Goliath? All the Israelite armies are terrified of Goliath, including the current king, Saul, who's supposed to be this big bad warrior. But not David. And 1 Samuel 17 gives us the reason:

*34 But David said to Saul, "Your servant has been keeping his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, 35 I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it. 36 Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. 37*



*The Lord who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine.”*

So what gives David this confidence? What gives him this courage when everyone else is terrified? It's because of his time in the pasture. David's faith was cultivated in the field. **The process was his preparation.**

Like think about it, picture this with me, David is in the pasture watching sheep, gets called to be king and then goes back to watching sheep. And while there can be a lot to do with watching sheep if we're honest he's probably bored outta his mind, right? He's probably out with his slingshot practicing on some tree thinking, there's no way God is going to use me. And when he's finally tired of doing that he gets out his favorite instrument and starts working on his songwriting skills. Again thinking, there's no way God is going to use this.

Now we can smile because we know about Goliath. We know about the Psalms, but you have to understand, David doesn't yet know all of this will come to pass. He can only see what's in front of him and it doesn't look like him being king. **Here's the point, the pasture was right where God wanted him. David was learning how to follow and trust God in obscurity. God knew the ways in which to grow David. To grow his character. To grow his skillset. David was growing in courage, confidence, and faith. There are some things that need to be learned in the background that can't be learned on stage.**

And here's the thing, no one would have guessed that would have been the method which God would accomplish his purpose. It's too weird. It's too unlikely. It doesn't make a lick of sense. But God, being God, likes using what seems challenging to us, to flex a little. God likes working through unlikely processes. And guess who is our best example for this? Jesus.

The whole life of Jesus is not what anyone expected. I mean. Think about it for a second. God became a baby. Let that sink in. God became a baby. Even though he was already in existence. He was born into the world he created. And then he lived for 33 years. And he spent 30 of them just doing a regular job. Then God dies at the hands of his creation. And then he comes back from the dead and he doesn't even fix everything. Then he just floats to heaven. And as he's floating away he tells his disciples to tell everyone that this is the plan. This is God's solution to fix all the sin in the world. All of the brokenness. All that's gone wrong in the world.

The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus is not what anyone would have expected as the solution to this. It just isn't what we would have expected from God. If you were writing a story, this aint it fam. Like think about it, this aint it. How can death bring life? How can his poverty bring us wealth? How could restraint bring freedom? How can losing my life allow me to find it? But the reality is that God would indeed use Jesus' life of suffering on the cross to save the world and save sinners in the most unlikely way. Through a cross. Through grace by faith.

Grace is not what people think of when they try and imagine how they should make themselves right with God. Case in point, every religion that people have invented always involves some sort of works based salvation. You earn your way to God. That if you clean yourself up enough, you will put yourself in the right position with God. And then here comes the God of the universe saying, you have no way of putting yourself in right position with me. But I will freely save you by grace because of the work that my Son has done. **See, kings don't normally come from pastures, and saviors don't normally come from crosses, but God loves to use unlikely processes.**

Church fam, we need to be very careful not to judge God based on your current circumstances. We need to be careful because we don't always know what God is doing. But he does. And for many of us, while that is a very frustrating thing to hear, it can also be the most freeing thing to hear.

**So the question is: Do we believe that God sees us right now? Do you believe that God sees you right where we are? Do you believe that? Some of us in the room might have some incredibly undesirable situations right now. Some of us feel like we are in the pasture. You're like I'm David right now in the pasture. Nobody knows. Nobody cares.**

**Do you believe that God has you there for a reason? Do you believe that he knows what he's doing? Maybe you're at a place in your life where you really think more should be happening. Something. Anything. And that is actually where you don't see God's hand or see God's purposes. But the reality is that God is at work in every bit of it, shaping you, working through you, cultivating your faith and your character; working to turn you into a man or woman after his own heart. Do you believe that God sees you right now and knows what's best for you?**

**And just in case anybody is going to misinterpret, to be clear, I am not saying that God's working right now because something amazing is coming your way. Don't get it twisted, you're not going to become the king of Israel. Don't over identify with David, that's not what I'm talking about. What I'm talking about is your life being used for God's**

**purposes, whatever shape that might take.** I'm talking about you becoming more like Jesus so that your very life itself is a ministry, that your circumstances become less relevant to your power, because your life is a ministry, because you have more faith and more humility, and more love and more grace and more spirit, because the process is a part of the preparation.

I want you to understand that even your undesirable circumstances, whatever they are, they're not in the way of the goal of God's purposes in your life, they're a central part to it. You might not see what God's doing, but he does. So the call is to learn to be faithful where you are. Just because the process doesn't make sense to you doesn't mean that God doesn't know what he's doing. Because the God who makes kings from unlikely people through unlikely processes, will be faithful to unlikely us.

So that's your introduction to David. It's a story about David, as much as it is a story about God. As we look to study, David, over the coming weeks, we'll take some different looks at people that God brings into his life, things that we can learn about friendship, and about enemies, and about temptation, and all sorts of practically relevant things. But the theme through all of it is that David's not actually the hero, God is.

So let me pray. And we'll transition and have some time to think through this stuff to repent, to pray, maybe journal, we'll sing, we'll take communion, as we remember the body and blood of Jesus broken and spilled for us the most anointed process that anyone could come up with. And it's because nobody came up with it. It's what God revealed to us.

Let me pray, and we'll have time to respond.

*[following prayer at conclusion of teaching]*

During the next few songs, we're going to give you the opportunity to respond. Whether that's through song, reflection, journaling like I was saying before the prayer, or through communion. For followers of Jesus, communion is an opportunity to remember and reset on the realities of how Jesus, through his life, death, and resurrection, is reconciling all things to himself. So we take the bread, representing Jesus' body, and we dip it in the juice, representing Jesus' blood, and partake of it.

If you're a follower of Jesus here today, you're invited to head to the tables in the back and take communion anytime in the next few songs. If you're *not* a follower of Jesus, you don't need to feel any pressure to go and take communion—nobody is going to look at

you weird if you just stay put. But if you're a follower of Jesus, you're invited to participate in communion with us.

I'd like to invite you to stand together as we celebrate Jesus.