

# “The Blank Spaces” // 1 Samuel 16 // *The Life of David* #5<sup>1</sup>

## Announcements

Welcome everyone at all of our locations across the Triangle from here at Capital Hills to

- Alamance
- Chapel Hill
- Downtown Durham
- North Durham (they still on their honeymoon in the new building)
- Brier Creek
- Summit en Espanol
- Mandarin Campus
- Blue Ridge
- Apex
- Garner
- Our 2 campuses in the men’s and women’s correctional facilities
- ...and now, introducing for the very first time, all of our locations-- can we give a warm Summit welcome to our newest campus, joining us for the first time this weekend: **Fuquay-Varina!**

We are one church that meets in many locations across the Triangle. Instead of building one big building in the middle of the Triangle that

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<sup>1</sup> Works Consulted: Tim Chester, *1 Samuel For You: For reading, for feeding, for leading (God’s Word for You)*, The Good Book Company, September 15, 2014; John Sailhammer. *NIV Compact Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994); Beth Moore, “Summoned from the Sheepfold,” session taught with LifeWay, published in 2010; Timothy Keller, “The Lord’s

people drive 30-45 minutes to come to, we have sought to provide multiple locations, close to where you live, where you can attend and serve. We say, “*Stay where you are; serve where you live; let’s be the church in your community.*” God has been leading us to FV for quite some time and we’re excited to be permanent there starting this weekend.

Last weekend we had a **prayer service** and **pre-launch volunteer training** and 258 people attended. I have no idea how many are there this weekend, but we know God has been doing something there for a long time. For several years we’ve been praying for this area and serving it--working in and through the school to be a blessing to the area.

Summit, I pray we would NEVER get over what God is doing in the Triangle. I pray we would NEVER have a day where launching campuses is anything less than a celebration of God still moving to save and redeem here. We’re just trying to keep up with him. He’s the one that is moving, and we are just trying to follow him and keep up. So, Fuquay-Varina Campus, welcome! For all...

## (Introduction)

1 Samuel 16, if you have your Bibles...

Anointed,” sermon posted by GospelinLife.com, January 18, 2004; Joby Martin, “Prophets Priests Kings - Week 9: King David,” sermon preached at The Church of Eleven22, posted on June 23, 2019; Priscilla Shirer, “Anointed, Transformed, Redeemed,” (Disc 1), session taught with LifeWay at the DeeperStill conference, published in 2008.

I have an idea for a book that I might try to write over the next year. I am going to call it *"The Blank Spaces."* My daughters will be disappointed that it's not a reflection on my favorite Taylor Swift song, for all you T-Swizzle fans; it's about those little spaces in the Bible ["Bible blanks" pic] between narrative sections where all the activity seemingly stops. Sometimes these blank spaces represent large gaps of time, and typically we read right over them, but I always wonder how the people in the story must have felt in those blank spaces: "God, where did you go? You were doing so much and then you just stopped. Have you forgotten about me?"

We're going to see one of those today in 1 Samuel 16, just after verse 13: God sends Samuel, Israel's most famous prophet, to anoint David, a young shepherd boy, to be the next King of Israel. The Holy Spirit then rushes upon David mightily (16:13), and then--BLANK SPACE. And when vs. 14 picks up, the narrative shifts to something else. David won't become King for at least another 15 years.

David goes from his anointing to... this blank space. He didn't immediately become king; he didn't even go down to the palace to start trying on robes or doing interviews about his vision for the country with the *Jerusalem Times*. He goes from this incredible moment of anointing back to the pasture and... does what shepherds do. Chases sheep around. And that whole time was represented by this little blank space.

What did that feel like for David?

As a pastor, I have to interpret lots of difficult passages, but by far the most challenging parts of the Bible for me to interpret are these blank spaces. Times of apparent inactivity. Where did God go? He was there; it's like suddenly he just ghosted you. Has he forgotten you, or is he distracted with other more important things? Or, sometimes you think this: maybe he's not real. Maybe what I thought was him working in your life was just a string of coincidences and emotional

moments, but he's not really real, and these periods of silence prove that.

**Have you ever been there? Are you there now?** Blank spaces have been some of the most frustrating times in my life, but here's what I've learned about them: those moments where it seems like God is not doing anything are often where he is doing his best work. And that's what you are going to see today.

**16:1:** The Lord said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel? [Remember, this is what we covered last time: Saul looked great on the outside, but his character was compromised on the inside, and that made him rely on himself instead of God, and that cut him and Israel off from God's power.] Fill your horn with oil, Samuel, and go. I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons."

**So, Samuel goes down to Bethlehem, and finds Jesse at a community function. He says,** "Jesse, may I have a word?" And Jesse recognizes Samuel and says, "Sure," and Samuel says, "God told me that one of your sons will be Israel's next King!" Jesse thinks, "**Oh, I know exactly** which one that is--my first born, the pride of our home: Eliab." And so he sends for Eliab and Eliab walks over: [6] When they came, Samuel looked on Eliab and thought, "Surely the LORD's anointed is before him." (Eliab looked like a King; he was tall; good looking; with a commanding presence; those blue-steel eyes—THINK: (Nic Cage.)

[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 sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart."

**Samuel of all people should have known better**--this is Saul all over again. Just because you look like a King on the outside doesn't give you the heart of God's King on the inside--and Samuel of all people should have known this, but even great prophets get swept up by charm sometimes. So, God says, "**Samuel, I'm looking for something different in my king.** I'm not looking on the outside, I'm looking on the inside." (BTW, if you trace Eliab's story through the rest of 1 Samuel, you'll see that Eliab turns out to be arrogant, critical and untrusting of God at key places. Sure, he's the all-American athlete, valedictorian, most likely to succeed, on everybody's "Who's Who" list, but he's not the one God is looking for. Sadly, those people rarely are.

And so, Samuel says to Jesse, "**Got any other sons?**" And Jesse sends for his second born. This guy is a little less impressive than Eliab, but he still fits the profile: tall, good-looking, smart, athletic. But God says, "Not him, either. Send for another." And they do this 7 times: [10] And Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen any of these."

At this point, it's starting to get a bit awkward. Imagine the latest girl on the Bachelorette--they are at the rose-giving ceremony, and she proceeds to go through the room explaining why she's not giving it to this guy and that guy, dismissing each one as she goes, until finally she's dismissed everyone and it's just her and Jesse Palmer (the host). At which point he says, "You can't dismiss all the candidates. You have to pick one." That's Samuel. All the sons have been dismissed and he's still standing there with the rose.

I love this next question: [11] Then Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?" (Jesse, any kids you've forgotten about?) And Jesse is like (counting fingers), 'Oh yeah...! There IS one more.' Forgot about him. How many of you--this was, or is, you in your family? Middle children feel like this sometimes; sometimes the youngest does. **Parents, sometimes we are to blame:** when we first had Kharis, we took

pictures of EVERYTHING. "Oh, the first time she spit up Cheerios. Let's get a picture of that." "Oh, her 8th, first steps. Let's make sure to get a picture of that.' For the second kid, you start slowing the picture-roll down--now it's more about big events: actual first steps; first night in a big-girl bed; first day of preschool. Our 3rd kid, even more selective in the pictures we take. By the time we get to Adon, his Kindergarten teacher asks for a head shot of him and we're like, "*Do we have any pictures of Adon yet?*" Veronica wants me to assure you that's not really true--but some of you felt like that. That's how David was.

And Jesse said, "There remains yet the youngest, but behold, he is keeping the sheep."

- **Youngest** is the Hebrew word "**haqqaton**," which is probably not the best translation. '**Haqqaton**' is a very rare word in Hebrew; it's a blend of the words "young" and "unimportant." Some scholars say the best translation is "runt." The word sounds like an insult: **haqqaton**. Start to use that one on your friends. The point is we've gone from the "who's who!" list to the "who's he?" list.
- And what's he out doing? **He's out keeping the sheep;** which was considered the lowest job in Israel--the kind of job that *needed* to be done by somebody but *nobody* wanted to be that somebody. Think the guy in the circus following along behind the elephant with the giant pooper-scooper. You are glad somebody is doing it; you just don't want to be that somebody.

And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and get him, for we will not sit down till he comes here." (Is it me, or does Samuel strike you as a bit ornery here? "Jesse, clearly I asked you...")

[12] And he sent and brought him in. Now he (David, of course) was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome.

- *Ruddy, like haqqaton, is an unusual word in Hebrew. Some translators say it means "red-headed and freckled."* **Others say it**

means dirty, disheveled, tanned, and stinking of the pasture. How one word could potentially mean both things I have no idea.

- Whatever it means, David was ruddy.

**...and he had beautiful eyes...**

- Some of your wimpy translations (NIV) say, “was of fine appearance,” but in Hebrew the phrase literally says, “of beautiful eyes.” I vote to keep the literal translation.
- Beth Moore says one of the great advantages of being a woman is that, as a woman, when you see another woman and you think she has beautiful eyes you can just tell her, even if you don’t know her. You’re standing in the checkout line at the grocery store, you can just say, “Has anyone ever told you that you have beautiful eyes?” And the lady will appreciate it. It’s not weird. We men--we can’t do that: “(LOW VOICE)--Hey man, has anybody ever told you that you have beautiful eyes?” Guys, look at your neighbor... if you think he has beautiful eyes, tell him... Can’t do that, can we? Maybe we should change that, guys. You can be a tough guy and recognize when a brother has pretty eyes. Right? Guys, what do you think? Survey says... Not doing that. But David had pretty eyes.

**...and (he was) handsome.**

- He’s cute, but the point is, he **doesn’t look like a** valiant warrior or a King. When you are choosing a warrior-king, you want a dude who looks like he can kill other dudes. We don’t know for sure how big William Wallace (pic) was (Braveheart) but we know his sword was 5’6. That’s gigantic. That means William Wallace had to be at least 6’6 or 6’7. That’s what a king looked like. David is the opposite of this. He is just a **runt kid with a baby face.**
- Think *Justin Bieber*, or a *Jonas Brother* or this guy (curtis 1) [\*\*wait a beat\*\*, then ... (curtis 2)]

- This is who God chooses. So all you runt kids with dirty jobs and baby faces--the future is bright for you.

[12] And the Lord said, “Arise, anoint him, for this is he.” [13] ...and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon David.

Now, let me ask you a question: Why all this drama and rigamarole? If God knew he wanted David, why not just say to Samuel--“Hey, go to Jesse, it’s the youngest son, his name is David?” Why go through this whole charade and all the drama?

**It is to emphasize our first lesson from this story:**

### **I. God chooses the unlikely**

This is one of the most consistently recurring points in the Bible. God chooses the unlikely. It literally runs from the front of your Bible to the back.

- In Genesis, God chooses the meager, humble offering of poor Abel, not the rich offering of prosperous Cain; he bestows the blessing to the younger, wimpier Jacob, not the firstborn, man’s man, all-county athlete, Esau; he promises the Messianic lineage to the plain Leah, not the beautiful Rachel; to lead the Exodus he chooses the stammering Moses, not the silver-tongued Aaron; as the mother of Israel’s greatest prophet, he chooses barren Hannah not fertile Penninah.
- Secular human history has always favored the most beautiful of women and the strongest of men. But God consistently chooses Jacobs, Leahs, Hannahs, and puny Davids to build his Kingdom.<sup>2</sup>
- **(Adrian Rogers example)** Good news/bad news. Good news: God can use you ALSO. Bad news: you are not his first choice. Here’s how it goes...

<sup>2</sup> Tim Keller

- God consistently chooses the unlikely, the underdog, the overlooked, so that the power and glory are his.

Which leads me to the 2nd lesson:

## II. In God's Kingdom, character is paramount

Vs. 7 is the key verse: "For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart." (16:7)

This is a repeat from our study of Saul, but when God looks for leaders, he doesn't value what we value. He prioritizes character over charisma; and that's because what we need in a King is someone who could restore us to God.

- You see, our main problem was that we weren't powerful enough or smart enough or pretty enough. If so, God would have just supplied us with a King who could supply those things. But those things are not our main problem; our main problem is that we have been separated from God by pride and disobedience, and that means what we most need is someone who can reconnect us to God.
- God doesn't want us to try to find identity, security and happiness apart from him in a Saul or an Eliab; he wants us to find those things in him. He is power and beauty and significance and security in abundance, so, when God is choosing his leaders, he doesn't say, "Wow, great dresser," or "impressive resume" or "stunning IQ. Look how tall and strong that guy is or how articulate and commanding that girl is!" He looks here (heart). He's looking for someone who will listen to him and let his Spirit work through him.
- **Which is what happened in vs. 13:** Because of David's humble heart, the Spirit of the Lord rushed on him and stayed on him.

**I explained the first week that Israel's search for a King is representative of all of our search for salvation.** All of us are searching for identity, security and happiness (those are the existential components of salvation) in something, and we see a Saul or an Eliab and think that's what we are looking for: A King who is tall and good-looking and strong and who will make us stand head and shoulders above everyone else. Maybe that "King" is looking a certain way; graduating from a particular school; maybe it's having this particular job or making this amount of money. Maybe it's getting married and having a family. What do you look to to give yourself identity, security, and happiness? What makes you feel significant? What would make you feel secure as you go into the future? You think, "If I have *this*, or I am *this*, I'll feel good about myself and confident about the future." Being good-looking, married, recognized as a great athlete; professionally successful; rich--what is it?

All of us choose a King that looks good to us and then we give ourselves to pursuit of that King. **But all these "kings" let us down.** In fact, this might be the PRIMARY plotline of the Bible: We look for I, S, H—in other words, salvation— in all the wrong places. Since the beginning, we've been attracted to Saul and Eliab, and that's not where salvation is found.

- **Think about it: How were Adam and Eve deceived in the Garden of Eden?** Gen 3:6 says, "They saw the fruit, that it was good for food, and that it would make one wise," and so they ate it. Their eyes and heart said, "This is what looks good," but it led to death. They evaluated the fruit the way Israel evaluated potential Kings. It was pleasing to the eyes. They were trying to find I,S, H and apart from God.
- The book of Proverbs says it plainly, "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death." Prov 14:12. There is a way that looks so good, so promising--it's good for food, good for the eyes, to make one wise, it's Saul, it's Eliab--but it leads only to death.

**The universal human mistake is to look for salvation in the wrong places;** what God was teaching Israel through this whole ordeal was that salvation came from being united to God, and when it comes to being united to God, character is paramount. **That's the main lesson.**

But, there's a side application: when we are evaluating people-- whether we are talking potential boyfriend or girlfriend; potential spouse; who you put in your circle of best friends; who you are going to hire as an employee, or a pastor--we should also prioritize character.

We still tend to evaluate people the way Israel evaluated potential kings. Who or what looks the best. What will give us the most status? What will make us the most money? But that's a terrible way to go through life. Character brings more blessing into your life than beauty.

**How many times have you heard a guy say** (and he thinks this is romantic) "The moment I saw her, I knew I was going to marry her." That sounds romantic, but it's horrible! You don't know what she's like. Is she a woman of integrity? How does she handle conflict? Does she hold a grudge? Is she obsessive? You don't even know if she's an axe murderer! All you know is that she is PRETTY. That's not romantic. Quite frankly, it's stupid.<sup>3</sup> Men or women: I guarantee you 20 years into your marriage it's not that pretty face or that great body that is going to bless you most. It's whether they love and obey God; whether they are a person of grace, integrity and character. **Prioritize character in your evaluation of people.**

**The flipside of that is this question:** How much time do you spend preparing your character? If that's what God is looking for, and what

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<sup>3</sup> Tim Keller.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Paul told the Corinthians that you could literally be the most spiritually talented person on the planet--the wisest, the best preacher, have the

you should be looking for, how much time do you spend working on it in yourself?

***Are you the person that the person you are looking for is looking for?***

**The NYT journalist David Brooks talks about the difference between resume virtues and eulogy virtues. What are resume virtues?** She accomplished this. She graduated with this honor. Those are great, but you ever notice that none of those things make it into the funeral eulogy? What do they talk about at your funeral? They talk about what a loyal friend you were; what a sacrificial mother you were; how she always put others first, how she always gave you the benefit of the doubt and made time for you; how she was so gracious and forgiving... How dad always put us before his career." If they say good things at your funeral, that's what it will be about. It's not gonna be your resume virtues; it's gonna be your eulogy virtues.

- We spend so much time on **building resume virtues**, but how much time do we spend building eulogy virtues since, in the end, even to us that's what matters most?<sup>4</sup>

Do you want to know what makes you truly beautiful, both in God's eyes and in the eyes of others? It's not your resume. It's not your uniqueness. (In our day we've developed this absurd idea that we establish our beauty just by letting out the inner me. "You're unique. One of a kind. A snowflake. A skittle. True beauty is figuring out who the true you really is and showing that to the world. Discover your unique inner truth and let it out."

- **The Christian philosopher John Lennox points out that being unique does not in and of itself make something beautiful.** Every pile of dog poop, he says, is unique--they all come out completely

greatest faith, be the most generous--and if you don't have love overflowing out of a beautiful heart, it's all worthless.



different, in a different pattern--but that doesn't make them beautiful.)

- What makes you beautiful, in God's eyes, is character. So, if you're going to focus on anything, focus on developing character.

3rd lesson:

### III. Character is best formed in the blank spaces

Again, vs. 13 ends with Samuel, the great prophet, his hand on David's head, the oil of anointing running down his neck, the Holy Spirit rushing upon him and then... BLANK SPACE. The narrative ends and in vs. 14 it shifts to Saul, and David heads back to the pasture. For months. Possibly even YEARS.

- In fact, look down in vs. 19: it says that when they come to look for David a few years later, they have to get him from the sheep. After being anointed king, he still chasing sheep around in the desert.
- **And here's what's more:** Even after things really start happening in David's life, Saul gets jealous of him and hunts him like a criminal--**for over a decade!** *Imagine David during that time*, "But I was anointed king! I sensed the Holy Spirit rushing upon me! I know my destiny! Where did God go? Has there been a mistake?"
- No. No mistake. You see, **God uses the pasture, or the wilderness, to prepare his leaders. That's where God produces in you the character to lead.**
- **Chuck Swindoll** says that 3 words characterize David's time in the pasture. If you have a paper Bible, write these in that blank space
  - 1st word: **Obscurity**: no one paid any attention to David.
  - 2nd word: **Monotony**: "David... what did you do today?" "I watched the sheep. They walked from here to there..."
    - "What else?" *I worked a little with this slingshot...*
    - *I practiced on my harp. I even wrote a couple of songs. Do you want to hear one? 'The Lord is my Shepherd...'* While

David is telling you this your eyes are glazing over; it seems so insignificant... **Obscurity and monotony.**

- 3rd word: **Reality**: In the pasture, God developed **David's skill with the slingshot**: that would come in handy later. **And with the harp**: David would become the world's most famous songwriter. **He developed courage**: one day he'd look at Goliath and say, "I experienced God's power enabling me to defeat a lion and bear. I know that same power can handle Goliath." **He learned humility** cleaning up sheep poop so that, unlike Saul, he wouldn't ever forget where he came from and because of that, he'd always stay dependent on God. **Because of the time in the pasture, he learned to be patient.** He learned how to **care for people**. He learned how to **take care of a flock**. He learned that **God always kept his promises.**

**Psalm 78:72** says "With upright heart (David) shepherded them and guided them with his skillful hand." Those things were learned in the pasture, not the palace.

- Church, this is still what God does! "Hey mom, what did you do today?" "Sigh, I changed some diapers." **No, God was building character in you!** Your work, of course, has value in and of itself--you were serving another human made in the image of God. But God was also at work in you, shaping you for eternal service.
- **Hey businessman or businesswoman:** What did you do today? "I worked a dead-end job." **No, God is building character in and through you!** Who knows what God is doing in and through your faithfulness?
- **Hey student, what did you do?** "I studied some lame things about history and calculus that I'll never use again." **No, God is building character in and through you!** God is using this time to prepare for a far more important exam.
- **Friend, here's the rule of pasture time:** "Faithfulness in the small produces power in the big." (And, btw, maybe it's never big on the world stage, but big in eternity!)

**When God wants to prepare a leader, he always sends them to the pasture!** Y'all, this is so consistent a theme in Scripture I'd almost say it is axiomatic.

- When God chooses someone, he sends them through a time of monotonous faithfulness where they have to show whether they'll be faithful in small things.
- **He lets them experience pain.** Remember **A.W. Tozer**, "When God wants to use someone greatly, he first hurts them very deeply."
- Expect it. It's your blank space. Blank spaces are how God prepares his leaders.
- Friend in seminary (sand pail)...

*Which leads me this morning, finally, to...*

### Two Takeaways:

#### 1. Don't despise your blank spaces

- **This pasture, this wilderness, is God's laboratory for forming in you that heart he wants.**
- Do you want to, like David, be a man after God's own heart? Then God must prepare you like he prepared David. Don't waste your pasture. Don't waste your suffering.
- **Be faithful:** Something I learned this time in my study of this passage I'd never seen before: Do you remember, when we first met Saul, what the circumstance was? He'd lost his father's donkeys. IOW, he was a failed shepherd. But when we first meet David, he is tending his sheep, even when there was a celebrity back at his house. IOW, he was a faithful shepherd.<sup>5</sup>
  - Faithfulness in the small things predicted faithfulness in the big things.

- God took David from the pasture and made him king. David's job—a shepherd—didn't change. It was just his flock that changed.<sup>6</sup>
- Faithfulness in the small sets the patterns for faithfulness in the big. So don't despise the day of small things; learn to be faithful in them.
- **Student: like I said... your schoolwork is not meaningless--** God is using it to teach you how to do your best for the glory of God. How to persevere through difficulty and failure.
- **Your personal purity now is important.** It's determining whether you will be faithful to obey God in the face of future temptations. A young man or woman who brings their sexual passions under God's control now is someone God can trust with great responsibility later.
- **How faithfully you spend time with God now is significant--**it shows whether you are going to be someone who walks with God consistently or only runs to him when you need something.
- **Your faithfulness to your friends right now is big deal,** because it shows whether you will be faithful to the people God assigns to you later
- **Your obedience to your parents right now is important--**it shows whether or not you will submit to God later.
- **Be faithful during this time. You're in the lab. You're being tested.** (BTW, I'm applying this mostly to young people because David was young, but for us adults God continues to use seasons of waiting to prepare us.) The point is, regardless of how old you are:
- **Be faithful in the blank spaces, and, one more thing on this: be intentional:** God cultivated David's heart in that pasture through long periods of silence, solitude, reflection, and prayer. I'm confident David would never have become David had he had the TV on the whole time or spent all his time in the pasture scrolling

<sup>5</sup> Tim Chester

<sup>6</sup> 2Sam. 7:8; 5:2; 24:17. See Tim Chester.



through TikTok and posting stupid videos of himself. Get rid of TikTok; limit yourself to 1 show a night and make time for God. Better yet, get up a little earlier and meet him in the mornings.

OK, last takeaway:

## 2. Don't miss Jesus

**People always make the mistake of reading these Old Testament stories as if they are all about us.** We think, "The moral of the story is, 'Don't judge a book by its cover! Be like David, a man of character.'" And yes, as I've shown you, those are good lessons to draw. **But listen, these stories are not primarily about us!** They are not even primarily about David.

**Let me prove that to you:** First, who among us could really say, "I have the heart God is looking for. I am a man (or woman) after God's own heart?" TBH, when I read that phrase, "God looks on the heart," I don't find that altogether encouraging? Even on my best days I am fearful, judgmental, unkind, selfish, unforgiving, willing to bend the truth to get out of a jam. **Imagine if attached to the side of your head was a little LED monitor** displaying what you were thinking at all times. How horrible and embarrassing would that be? Yet, that's what God sees. I want to have a good heart, but I know my heart is not good enough for God's fellowship and if God's looking at the heart, I'm in trouble. BTW, ultimately, David's heart was not that good either. We'll see that later.

**Which is why you have to read these stories as not first and foremost about us, or David, but JESUS.**

VAMP

**Think about it--**don't you see in David's story a silhouette that one day Jesus will step into? **Check it out:**

- David was the unlikely choice. He was a runt shepherd boy.
- Jesus also was an unlikely choice: He wasn't a rising ruler; rabbi; on the dean's list or an all-county athlete. He was not the "40 Israeli leaders to watch under 40" He was a blue-collar worker. He had "no external form or beauty that we should desire him"-- which means that if he were in here, you'd never notice him. He'd be plain in every way, other than that he was fully dependent on God.
- **He was unlikely and ordinary, but, like David, God anointed him.** In fact, the Hebrew word "anointed" used here in 1 Samuel 16 is "*meschach*," and out of that word comes 'Messiah.' Messiah means anointed one. Jesus was the truly anointed one.
- **And like David, when Jesus was anointed, the Holy Spirit rushed upon him.**
- And like David, when that happened, great power came upon him. When the Spirit rushed upon David, he defeated the lion and bear and knocked down Goliath. When the Spirit came on Jesus, he gained the power to heal diseases, walk on water and raise the dead.
- After David was anointed and filled with the Spirit, he went back to the pasture and then was driven into the wilderness. **What happened after Jesus was anointed** and the Spirit of God descended on him? *He was driven into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil for 40 days.*
- See the parallels? Jesus was the man of perfect character, the one truly after God's own heart. BUT UNLIKE DAVID, JESUS NEVER ENDED UP IN THE PALACE. The man after God's own heart ENDED UP ON THE CROSS. But there he would die for my sins.
- You see, even though he was perfect, we were his sheep, he died for all the ways I wasn't a man after his own heart. Because of that, I can be received like a man after God's own heart. In him I can hear, "You are my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased."

- And when I receive him, God's Spirit rushes upon me and goes to work in my heart, reshaping my heart into one like his, into someone after his own heart. And because he died in my place, I know that even when I don't have the heart God desires, he will never leave me or forsake me.<sup>7</sup> Jesus paid it all...

*And see, that's really important to understand when I go through my pasture time, my wilderness, my blank spaces, because **the worst part about those blank spaces is the feeling you are abandoned by God.***

- But because of the cross, I know I'm not abandoned. Even when I feel alone, I know I'm not, and I know that in all things my life is being directed by a great and gracious hand.

**Just like God worked in David's pastures and wildernesses, he's working in mine.** Even when I can't feel it he's working; even when I can't see it...

**Think about it:**

- David was anointed, filled with the Spirit, then went back to the pasture and was hunted down by Saul.
- Christ was anointed, filled with the Spirit and driven into the wilderness and went to the cross.
- **2 Cor 1:22** says that you, as a believer, are anointed, filled with God's Spirit, so guess where you might be headed?

**And just like God brought his greatest works out of David's pastures and wildernesses, so he is bringing his greatest works out of yours.** In the wilderness you learn to trust him. In the wilderness you experience the healing that makes you a great healer. It's like I've heard said: *"Those who have been powerfully healed become powerful healers."*<sup>8</sup>

That's what God is doing in your blank spaces. **So friend, worship Jesus, and hang on in your blank spaces. God's at work.**

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<sup>7</sup> Tim Chester

<sup>8</sup> Tyler Stanton, Bridgetown Church