

A Shepherd King

(1 Samuel 16:1-13)

Pre-Session Warm Up

[Teacher, fill a candy box with something inedible, but something that would make the box feel as if it contained the expected goodies. It would be wise to have some treat ready at the end of class so this object lesson doesn't disappoint.] I brought a treat with me today! What do you think it is? Oh! It isn't what you thought. By looking on the outside you thought you knew what was on the inside. Do you think it is possible for a boy or girl to look different on the outside from what he or she really is? Some boys and girls I know look so nice on the outside, but they are really "meanies." The real you, or your heart-attitude, is what really matters to God. God uses those whose hearts are right with Him.

In our Bible story today, we'll find out who God chose to be the new king of Israel and why God chose him.

Opening Prayer

Father, teach us this morning never to judge a person by what we see on the outside. Help us to learn to see people the way You see them, from the inside out. We want to learn to love people the way You do. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. (Deuteronomy 6:5 ESV)

Lesson

After 200 years of being ruled by judges, the children of Israel asked God to give them a king. God told the people that it wouldn't be good for them to have an earthly king. But they refused to listen. They demanded that God give them a king. So God had Samuel, the last judge, appoint Saul to be the king of Israel.

Saul started out as a good king. But after a while he became full of pride. He got to the point that he wasn't as interested in obeying God as he used to be. He seemed to want to do everything his own way instead of God's way.

Because Saul disobeyed God, He didn't want Saul to be king anymore. It was a sad day for Samuel and for all Israel when God rejected their king for being deliberately disobedient to Him. Samuel's heart broke over the whole situation.

God told Samuel he wanted him to go anoint another man to be king of Israel.

1 Samuel 16:1

Now the LORD said to Samuel, "You have mourned long enough for Saul. I have rejected him as king of Israel, so fill your flask with olive oil and go to Bethlehem. Find a man named Jesse who lives there, for I have selected one of his sons to be my king."

God told Samuel to stop feeling so sad about the way things worked out for Saul; He had someone else in mind. And that made Samuel worried about how Saul would react to this.

1 Samuel 16:2-3

But Samuel asked, "How can I do that? If Saul hears about it, he will kill me." "Take a heifer with you," the LORD replied, "and say that you have come to make a sacrifice to the LORD. Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you which of his sons to anoint for me."

God told Samuel to invite Jesse and his sons to a time of worship. Then He would show Samuel what to do from there. So Samuel packed up and went to Bethlehem. He found Jesse and invited him and his seven sons to worship God with him. When they came together, Samuel saw Jesse's oldest son, Eliab.

1 Samuel 16:6

When they arrived, Samuel took one look at Eliab and thought, "Surely this is the LORD's anointed!"

Eliab, Jesse's oldest son, must have been tall and good-looking. Because Samuel took one look at him and thought, "Surely this is the man the Lord has chosen to be king!"

1 Samuel 16:7

But the LORD said to Samuel, "Don't judge by his appearance or height, for I have rejected him. The LORD doesn't see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

God was teaching Samuel that how a person looks on the outside isn't important. God said to Samuel, "Don't pay attention to how he looks or how tall he is. What really matters is his heart-attitude toward God." God is the only One who knows our hearts – the real you and me, our inner feelings and deepest thoughts.

Maybe you know lots of Bible verses about loving other people, but deep down inside you often have mean thoughts about others. Perhaps you sing songs about loving Jesus in church, but during the week you seldom think about Him. Sooner or later what you think and feel on the inside will come out in what you say and do. You may be able to fool your parents or teachers for a while, but when God looks at your heart, what does He see? Does He see a heart full of sin, one that is disobedient and rebellious against Him? Or does He see a heart that wants to please and serve Him more than anything else?

When God is choosing someone for a special task, He looks at the heart-attitude to see if it is one of love and obedience to Him. The Bible says, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength." Do you love God that way? God uses those whose hearts are right with Him. Samuel was learning that God looks at what's on the inside of a person and not at the outward appearance.

People can only see how someone looks on the outside, but God is looking to see what is in a person's heart. How a person thinks and feels is more important than how a person looks.

1 Samuel 16:8

Then Jesse told his son Abinadab to step forward and walk in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, "This is not the one the LORD has chosen."

Jesse brought his second son before Samuel. But God said he wasn't the right one either. Maybe it would be the third son.

1 Samuel 16:9

Next Jesse summoned Shimea, but Samuel said, "Neither is this the one the LORD has chosen."

One by one Jesse brought his sons before Samuel. And not one of them was the one God wanted! God had told Samuel to visit Jesse. Where was the son God had chosen to be the next king?

1 Samuel 16:10-11

In the same way all seven of Jesse's sons were presented to Samuel. But Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen any of these." Then Samuel asked, "Are these all the sons you have?" "There is still the youngest," Jesse replied. "But he's out in the fields watching the sheep and goats." "Send for him at once," Samuel said. "We will not sit down to eat until he arrives."

No one was getting any dinner until God showed Samuel who the next king was going to be.

1 Samuel 16:12

So Jesse sent for him. He was dark and handsome, with beautiful eyes. And the LORD said, "This is the one; anoint him."

David was the one that God had chosen to be the next king over Israel. Why do you think God chose David? What was it He saw in David's heart? God must have seen in David a heart that



was right towards Him. David loved God with all of his heart. David trusted God with his whole life. David desired to please God with everything that he thought, said, and did. David had a heart completely committed to God.

1 Samuel 16:13

So as David stood there among his brothers, Samuel took the flask of olive oil he had brought and anointed David with the oil. And the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon David from that day on. Then Samuel returned to Ramah.

We can show that we love God, too. The Bible says, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.” When we do what this verse says, we show that we love God and want to obey Him in everything we do.

Your heart-attitude is very important. Because what is on the inside will eventually show up in your actions. A right attitude produces right actions, but a wrong heart-attitude causes wrong actions. If you are happy and loving and full of joy, you will treat others with love. But if you are angry or jealous inside, you will be mean to others.

This week will you ask God to examine your heart and to show you if there is anything that displeases Him? Are you angry with someone? Or jealous? Are you depending on God, or are you worrying all the time? God will show you if there is anything wrong. Confess that sin to Him so that your heart-attitude will be right.

Closing Prayer

Father, help us to have the right heart attitude this week. Keep our hearts pure before You. We don't want to harbor any anger or jealousy or worry. We want to love You with all our hearts so that we can love others in the same way You love us. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

On a large heart shaped piece of construction paper, have the children draw a picture of a way to show love for God. On the other side, have them draw a picture of a way they can show love to a person they love (mom, friend, grandparent.)

To help the children think of what to draw ask some of these questions:

- Who is someone you love?
- How do you show that person you love him or her?
- What are some ways we can show that we love God?

Object Lesson

Materials:

- A pitcher of Kool-Aid (or brightly colored water)
- 3 clear glasses
- 3 index cards

Procedure:

1. Write one word on each of the index cards: Heart, Soul, Mind.
2. Tape each card on the outside of a glass.
3. Invite the children to look at the glasses.
4. Ask: “*Who in this room loves God? Show me how much you love God? This much?*” (Demonstrate an inch, then about a foot in size...)
5. Share the Memory Verse and talk about it.
6. Pour some of the Kool-Aid into a couple of the glasses and ask: “*Is this enough for God?*”

7. Fill the glasses to about half full and say: *"I could give God half of my heart. That would be OK, right?"*
8. Keep up the conversation until all three glasses are absolutely full.
9. Say, *"This is what God wants! He wants us to love him with our whole heart, soul and might. He wants our love for Him to overflow all over everyone around us!"*

Game Center

Don't be hard-hearted

Materials:

- Carton of eggs

Procedure:

1. Hard boil 3 of the eggs.
2. Using a Sharpie permanent marker, draw happy faces on all of the eggs.
3. For a correct answer to a review question, a child gets to choose an egg to crack. If the egg is raw, that child's team gets 1,000 points; if the egg is hard boiled, he gets a ZONK, or no points.



Or, use the following questions in a game of your choice:

1. Why did Samuel go to Bethlehem? (God told him to visit Jesse)
2. What did God tell Samuel to take with him? (A flask of anointing oil and a heifer for sacrifice.)
3. What did God tell Samuel NOT to look for when choosing the new king? (What the person looks like or how tall a person is.)
4. Why did God choose David to be king? (David had a heart completely committed to God.)

5. Read our Memory Verse. What does "love God with all your heart, soul and strength" mean? (Show that you love God and that you want to obey Him in everything that you do.)
6. What are some ways people show that they love God? (Pray. Learn Bible verses. Sing, Show God's love to other people.)
7. What can we do to obey our Memory verse? (Obey God and show that we love Him in everything we do.)
8. When have you seen someone show love for God? How did you know that person loved God?
9. How can we show that we love God more than anything else?
10. Who is somebody you love very much? How can you show your love for them?

