

## You Are the One!

A sermon based on 1 Samuel 16:1-13

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

“You’re the one!” You still can’t believe your eyes, after checking your ticket it seems like a hundred times, you’re one of the three winners of the record-shattering Powerball jackpot of \$1.5 billion (you just haven’t come out publicly, though, have you?!?!).

“It’s you. You are the next Miss Universe!” You were the one standing on the stage that night, who, after the host’s huge snafu, was crowned Miss Universe 2015.

“Well, the buck stops with you now, Mr. President.” You’re the one, in about a year, holding one hand up, with the other hand on a Bible, about to be sworn in as the next leader of our country, after your successful campaign led to a decisive victory in the election.

Imagine yourself in any of those situations. Standing in the spotlight, are you the kind of person who would enjoy your time there? All the attention, the watchful, yet ever-present critical eyes? Or, are you the person who shrinks away, who would do anything, anything, to cast the attention off of yourself?

Well, today, in the gospel, you saw someone get his moment in the spotlight. Not every day you see a man, whom John the Baptist would later confess, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,” it’s not every day you see the heavens open, the Holy Spirit descend like a dove upon just any ordinary person and God the Father proclaim, “This is the one! This is my Son, whom I love, with him I am well-pleased.” How deserving for Jesus!

But I’m here today to tell you about a time I had the humble privilege to share that same message with someone who would be so important in Israel’s history (and just as important in the line of the Savior), that he was the one God had chosen. I’m here today, still humbly privileged to share that same message with you. You are the one God has chosen. You are the one God loves. You are the one!

What is it that makes you the one? Now, in all of those first examples I gave you, how do you get to that conclusion, that someone is the one? Well, outside of the lottery (that’s pretty much all luck), it’s something about that person. With Miss Universe, it’s the smile, her looks, the way she carries herself and presents herself on stage, her confidence, her talent, her intelligence in answering the judges’ questions. The President, the way he/she campaigned, their previous track-record, the policies, their demeanor, is what makes them appealing to the voters.

Maybe closer to home, if you were picked first for kickball when you were younger, maybe it’s because you had a nasty pitch or just had a knack for knocking that ball all the way to the fence almost every time. If you get chosen for the promotion at work after a grueling interview process, it’s usually because of your skills, your reliability, your work ethic, all of those shown through what you’ve accomplished at your job. So often, when someone says to you, “You’re the one,” it’s because of something you’ve done.

Well, that's the same premise I was operating under as well when God sent me to Bethlehem to choose Israel's next king. Our first King, Saul, he definitely looked the part....tall, handsome, respected, carried himself with an aura of confidence. But, you also know, unfortunately, how that reign turned out.

Even so, when Jesse started parading his sons before me, that's what I was looking for. The oldest, Eliab, stood in front of me first, and I could just see him, sitting on the throne, leading the Israelite armies into battle, garnering the love and loyalty of the people. To me, he was the epitome of royal potential...his looks, his characteristics, his attitude. He was the one! I was ready to anoint him and start grooming him to be the next king of Israel.

But it wasn't up to me. "Samuel," God pulled me back a little, reigned in my eagerness, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him (as in, he's not the one). The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

"The LORD looks at the heart." There it was. Outward appearance, physical features, the body of work, didn't matter to God. The one he was going to choose to lead his people, the one who would be his faithful servant, the one who would be in the future spotlight as Israel's king, the only criteria God was looking at was the appearance of the heart.

And God's criteria for choosing the one, not just limited to Israel's king, but any of those who are to be a part of his heavenly kingdom...his criteria remains the same. "The LORD looks at the heart."

You know, I asked that question a few minutes ago, yet I didn't answer it, so let's go back to it. Again, what is it that makes you the one? What is it about you that thrusts you into God's spotlight? Again, the criteria...God looks at the heart. And when God looks at your heart, and at mine, it's a different kind of spotlight we're in, isn't it. Not the one bringing fame and praise, all that positive attention. No, more like being held in an interrogation room, with the bright light of God's law shining on us, exposing our crimes of sin, exposing our hearts for what they really are.

Take a look right now. What do you see? More importantly, what does God see? For me, it's, "Samuel, you are the one who's been a less than faithful leader to my people (because anything less than perfect is less than faithful, and, well, you're not perfect)." For me, it's, "Samuel, you are the one who's failed to be the kind of parent I want you to be, allowing your children to live corrupt lives without any parental intervention, the same folly of your predecessor, Eli, with his two sons."

For you, what is it? "Christian, you are the one who's de-prioritized me and my Word in your life when you don't seem as concerned about growing in your faith as you do living life your own way, being your own boss."

"Christian, you are the one who loses sight from time to time of what this life is really all about, readily looking to your own interests before those of your neighbor, before even considering what I want you to be doing, how I want you to be living." "Christian, you are the one who's fallen into sins of greed, gossip, anger, lies, lust, selfishness, sinning against people around you...sinning against you."

You know, it's easy to look good on the outside, so much so that any person could take a general look at you and your life and say, "Yup, you're the one. You're such a good person. God surely must love you."

But we can't hide what's in here from God. And what we have in here, is not good...not all the time. God sees that. And you, you might be the kind of person who shies away from the spotlight, from being the focus of attention. But our sins haven't escaped God's attention, and so you, like me, are the one who has sinned. You, like me, are the one who is guilty. You, like me, are the one who deserves God's eternal punishment.

And you, like me, can't do a thing about that sinful heart...not on your own. What we can do, however, is fall to our knees, and with humbled and repentant hearts cry out with the Psalmist, "Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me."

Now, how can you say that? What would ever move you to that point? Simple! It's not what, but who. And the "who" who moves you to repent of your sinful heart is God.

But why? Why would God, seeing your sinful heart, move you to repent, and why would God go one step further and forgive your sinful heart? Simply, because you're the one! You're the one he loves. You're the one he's anointed.

Maybe let me finish the account for you. After God's encouragement, that he looks at the heart, I knew Israel's next king wasn't Eliab. It wasn't any of the next six sons Jesse brought out before me, either. We got to the end of the line, when Jesse told me he had one more son, the youngest, David, who was out tending the sheep. When they called David in, I knew. This was the one. God even told me, "He is the one; rise and anoint him."

So, what was it about David? Didn't look the part, but that doesn't mean his appearance was unattractive...just, physically, there wasn't really anything about David that would have made him so appealing to God. But, again, God was focused on his heart. And not that David was different from you and I, that somehow he had a pure and perfect heart. But, for no other reason than his love and grace, God chose David, a sinner, and anointed him, and sent the Holy Spirit upon him.

Same as he's done for you and me. Even when our appearance wasn't all that great (far from it!), God loved you. God chose you. God anointed you. And his reason is no different...purely his love and grace.

Take another look at the gospel, and you see that love in action. What did God say about Jesus? "This is my Son, whom I love..." And what did God, in his love, do with Jesus? He had him baptized...he really had him anointed. You see, that word "anoint," literally means to "set apart."

When I anointed David, that was God setting David apart, singling him out to be the next king of Israel. And the Holy Spirit came upon him so David would grow into his new role...would grow spiritually into that role.

When John baptized (or anointed) Jesus, that was God setting him apart for an even greater purpose, which you know...to live for you, to die for you, to rise for you...so that our sins would be wiped away and forgiven and your heart and my heart and David's heart would be washed clean and made pure.

And as David was anointed king, as Jesus was anointed Savior, so also we sinners are anointed to be God's children. Friends, it's personal. For no other reason than his love and grace, on full display in Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, God takes what he did for the whole world at the cross of Jesus, and he makes it personal. He singles you out. He puts you in the spotlight of his loving glow. He comes to

you with his forgiveness, not just forgiveness for the sinfulness you were born with, but forgiveness for all sins, even the ones you haven't committed yet.

For you, all it took was a little bit of water, God's Word, and a whole lot of Jesus's love, but at your baptism. God chose you. As the cross marked your head and your heart, as the water touched your head, as the Jesus' words were spoken, in a sense, God said, "You are the one. You are the one I love. You are the one I forgive. You are the one I make my own child."

"You are the one I anoint. You are the one I've set apart...for a purpose." You and I, loved by God, anointed by God, baptized by God, sent out by God to, as Jesus commands, "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them..." Or, as the apostle Peter so famously wrote, "You are a chosen people...a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."

A humbling task, a blessed privilege, one you're equipped to carry out, not only because you've been anointed, but because you've been baptized. Your sins have been washed away. Your heart is pure. When God looks at your heart, that's what he sees...Jesus...and Jesus' righteousness, given to you at your baptism. And now, he's set you apart, given you the task to share his love with others.

You know, you might be the person who doesn't care for the spotlight and all the attention. Too bad. God thrust each of you into that light when he made you his own through the cleansing waters of baptism. Now, he's set you apart to put others into the spotlight, to give them your attention, to share Jesus with them, to tell them, "You're the one. You are the one God loves!" And we're glad to go. Amen.