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## *Vagabond: Anointed Not Appointed* I Samuel 16:1-14

I want to start this morning by telling you a familiar fairy tale and then, you tell me the title, okay? A member of the royal family goes on a journey in search of a particular missing person. He goes from house to house in this search with no luck. Finally, he appears at the home of a certain family. He asks to meet all of the children and they are hurried into the living room. But, one by one, they are rejected. "Are these all of your children," the man asks. "Well," responds the parent, "there is one more. But you wouldn't be interested in this servant. Surely that is not the person you are seeking!" But it turns out that the servant in hiding is in the one being sought and they have their joyful reunion. Then end.

So... can you name the story? I know. Sounds like Cinderella, doesn't it? But it's not! I just described our reading for the morning: Samuel's search for young David to anoint him as the next king of Israel.

Let me set the context. Saul, the strapping, handsome, tall hunk of a man, had been anointed by the prophet Samuel as the first king of Israel. Initially, he showed promise. He prayed, he trusted God, he led courageously. But after a while, Lord Acton's adage about power became true in Saul's life. Do you remember it? "Power corrupts. Absolute power corrupts absolutely." Saul was corrupted. He made one bad, unfaithful decision after another until, finally, we read these horrible words at the end of I Samuel 15: **"And the Lord was grieved that he had made Saul king over Israel."** Ouch!

It's a Cinderella story. An amazing, unlikely, miraculous story. And it's not a fairy tale. It happened. But for us to really experience the power of this story there are some things we need to understand.

First of all, we have **no** idea what a VIP Samuel was. Samuel was **the** Big Kahuna. He was the prophet of the Almighty God. We don't have a Super Prophet in the world so, just imagine with me the most powerful, trusted spiritual figure in the world today. Billy Graham? The pope? Imagine getting this call: "Yes, good morning. Is this \_\_\_\_\_. Listen, the pope is coming to Gig Harbor to visit you. He'll be here tomorrow. He wants you to slap a steak and the barbie, and then he has a message from God."

Would that get your attention? Would you wonder, "Uh oh, what did I do now?" Cuz that's exactly what the elders of Bethlehem thought when Samuel rolled into town.

For the prophet of God to show up unannounced... that could not be good news, could it? 4 **"When Samuel arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled when they met him. They asked, 'Do you come in peace?'"**

You never want the prophet of the Big Guy to be ticked at you. But no worries. Samuel wants to offer a sacrifice to the Lord. Everybody in town is invited...especially Jesse and his boys... the ones Samuel had really come to see.

Here's the second thing you need to understand about this story for it to make sense. In those days, everything depended upon birth order. When you prepared your will, you probably took great care to make sure that all of your children were treated equally, right? No favoritism. Not in those days! If you were the first born son, you hit the genetic lottery! You got the biggest chunk of your father's estate. If you were second, a much smaller percentage. And if you were further down the food chain? Tough beans. Of course, if something happened to big brother, everybody moved up a notch. But the further down the pecking order you fell, the more out of luck you were. Where did David fall in the birth order? Eight! He didn't even make number 7...which was at least considered a cool number. Eight was nothing! He was the runt of the litter. He wasn't even on his dad's mind. So, when Samuel instructed Jesse to present all of his sons, he didn't even bother to include David. After all, he already had seven fine, strapping boys on display. More than enough. And someone had to stay home and take care of the sheep and stuff.

So Samuel, the Big Kahuna shows up and demands an audience. He didn't even tell them what this was all about. Just lined them up and tried to figure out whom God had chosen to be the next king. And the minute Samuel saw Eliab, Jesse's eldest, he KNEW this must be the guy. Tall, dark and handsome. Now this was a guy who could lead the men and make the women swoon. Perfect king material, right?

Not this time. The Lord speaks these memorable words to Samuel: "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." (Hmm...what does our culture tend to look at? Whether you are beautiful or not so beautiful, never forget it: The Lord doesn't care what you look like. The Lord looks at your heart!)

So, Eliab was out. How about the second-born, Abinadab? How about him, Lord? Nope. Okay, number three. Shammah. One after another, Jesse paraded his seven sons in front of the Prophet. In the end Samuel says, "The Lord has not chosen these." Samuel must have been confused. Seven great choices...but a No to every one of them? Now what? "Jesse...are you sure that these all of your sons?" "Hmmm...well I think there's one more. Honey, do we have one more? Oh yeah, old what's his name. You know, the one with the sheep?" "Jesse, go get that boy; we aren't even going to sit down until he arrives!"

In marches the pipsqueak. David's face was ruddy—always flushed—maybe from the wind and sun. He was a good looking kid. But he wasn't dashing handsome like big brother. He certainly didn't look like king material. He looked like...well...a red-faced

teenager! **Then came the shocker:** “The Lord said, ‘**Rise and anoint him; he is the one.**’ 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 upon David in power.”

It was the most astounding moment in their lives. Samuel, the Lord’s prophet—the minute he sees David—hears a clear word from God: “This is the guy. Anoint him.” So David kneels... and Samuel pours oil upon his head and prays.

**Now I want you to notice something:** nothing is said about kingship! Not a word about WHY the runt brother is being anointed. Anointing was the symbol of God pouring out his Spirit on someone for a special purpose. It was used to consecrate and ordain. Priests were anointed. Prophets were anointed. The tabernacle—the tent where God met with the people while they were in the wilderness—and all of its furnishings ...**they** were even anointed. **And** kings were anointed. So...as big brothers watched their little brother being doused with oil, they knew something was up. Then we read these remarkable words: “**...and from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came upon David in power.**” Oil was the **symbol** of the Spirit. But the **actual** Holy Spirit of God came upon David in that moment as a young boy and never left him. This was unparalleled. In Old Testament times, the Holy Spirit would come upon specific individuals for a season, and then depart. But what set David apart was this: when he was anointed by Samuel, God sent his Holy Spirit upon him... never to leave him. Ever!

So the search was over. The lost boy had been found. The oil poured, the Holy Spirit descended. So if this was a fairy tale, what words would we expect to hear next? “And they lived happily ever after.” We turn the page and read as David is crowned king. The End. Right? **Did** David live happily ever after?

Not exactly. Keep your finger in this place. Now, turn to II Samuel 2:4: “**Then the men of Judah came to Hebron and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah.**” Wait a second! Hasn’t David **already** been anointed? Why the delay? We are never told. God doesn’t always care if we know! But do you know how long it was between David’s anointing his coronation? Twenty years! **Twenty years between the anointing and the appointing.** And they were twenty hard years. Oh, David had his high points, like when he killed Goliath. But almost immediately King Saul grows jealous and suspicious...and then crazy...and then homicidal. Three times Saul tries to pin David to the wall with his spear. And for most of the chapters that remain, David is on the run from Saul’s army. He hides in caves, hides with the priests, hides with the Philistines—imagine that, David finding refuge with Goliath’s people! David is so desperate, he pretends to be insane, he lies repeatedly, he even fights for the Philistines Israel’s sworn enemies.

David—the anointed King of Israel, the Holy Spirit empowered servant of God—becomes a **vagabond**. For twenty years he wanders, runs, hides, grieves. For twenty years, he waits for a kingship that doesn’t come. In fact, I wonder if David began to doubt that it would ever come. We’ve read the whole story; we know how it turns out. But I wonder if David began to question what happened that day in Bethlehem. After all, he was just a kid. A teenager kneeling before some strange old man as he poured

oil on his head. After twenty years as a vagabond, I wonder if David forgot his anointing?

For the next few weeks, we are going to look at David the Vagabond. We are going to watch as God uses these wanderings to prepare him for kingship. When David the boy knelt to be anointed ... he wasn't ready to be king. It was only **after** he faced betrayal, threats, heartache and personal spiritual and moral failure... only then that David was ready to be king. And since every one of us will experience betrayal, threats, heartache and personal spiritual and moral failure—and since most of us are experiencing some of this right now—it will be an encouragement to us to watch as God uses these wanderings to shape David into a man after his own heart.

But this morning as we begin this journey, I want to return to one thing: **the anointing**. I don't think I'd ever paid as much attention to this topic as I did this week. It had escaped me how really central the theme of anointing is in the scripture. From the beginning to the end, we see the significance...the power...of the anointing of God's Holy Spirit. Kings were anointed. Priests were anointed. Prophets were anointed. Tabernacles and worship furnishings were anointed. And all of those pointed forward to **the Anointed One**. Who? Jesus!

Do you know what the word "messiah" means? It is Hebrew for, "The Anointed One." Do you know what the word "Christ" means? It isn't Jesus' last name. It is Greek for, "The Anointed One." So, here's a question: when **was** the Anointed One anointed? The only time Jesus was anointed with oil was **for his death**. Do you remember who did it? Mary Magdalene. She interrupted a dinner and poured oil on his feet. But that was near the **end** of his ministry.

When was the Anointed One anointed for his life? His ministry? At his baptism! With oil? No! With the Holy Spirit. Jesus was the first one in the Bible who was anointed...not with oil, as a **symbol** of the Holy Spirit...but with the **actual** Holy Spirit! In fact, when Jesus preached his first sermon in his hometown of Nazareth, do you remember his opening words? "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me and he has **anointed** me to preach good news to the poor."

Now there's a punch line in here. Are you ready for it? **You have that same anointing!** Listen to Paul in II Cor 1:21: **Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.** Every single Christian here this morning has the anointing of kings, the anointing of priests, the anointing of prophets, the anointing of David. More than that, **you have the anointing of Messiah!** Think of that! The same Holy Spirit that came upon Jesus at his baptism has descended upon you. Taken up residence in you! Declared **you** to be holy, chosen, consecrated, set apart, royalty ...forever!

I think we forget that. I know I do. I think we forget that we have the anointing of Jesus! It's like having a million dollars in your bank account and not knowing it. You think you're poor. Then you get a statement and you realize: I am rich! **I don't think you realize how rich you are as a follower of the Anointed One.**

Are you a vagabond this morning? Are you in a place of wandering? There are times in our own wanderings when we forget our anointing. We received the gift of baptism and heard the promises of God...we made promises of our own...but we stop believing them. And we stop living them. We brought our children to the baptismal font and offered them to the Lord. But right now, they are far from God and we've stopped believing in the anointing. We walked to the wedding altar and made promises before God, sealed in his Holy Spirit. But we've stopped believing in that anointing. We enthusiastically offered ourselves in service to God...but time has passed and trials have come and our faith feels weak and tawdry...and we forget our anointing. We wander. We become vagabonds.

For twenty years, David was vagabond. And he got in trouble when he forgot his anointing. When he forgot that it wasn't just oil that fell on his head... but the Holy Spirit of God that filled his heart. You have that same, permanent anointing. So here's my question-**are you living like the anointed one?** There are many here this morning who once had a sense of call...a sense of destiny...a sense of purpose...that now seems unfulfilled. Are you living as if you have the anointing of kings...the anointing of priests and prophets ...the anointing of the Messiah himself?

Whatever you are facing, whatever your wanderings, however disappointed you are about the way things are turning out and how God is taking his own sweet time about it...if you walk out of here with this one conviction, you will be empowered to live like the royalty you are: **I am the anointed child Yahweh! I have the anointing of Jesus! No one can ever take that away from me! Hallelujah!**

## SERMON DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **Read** the passage out loud.
- **Reflect & Apply Individually:** Each person take 5-7 minutes to circle words or phrases that jumped out at them; jot down your reflections; check the notes in your Study Bible for insight or help. Grapple with what the Spirit is saying to you, your group, the church—write down some applications.
- **Reflect & Apply Together:** Share your thoughts. Don't teach! Listen and reflect on God's word together; grapple with what God is calling us to do and be through this passage.

● **Pray together:** tell the Lord one thing you are thankful for and lay one concern before the Lord.

● **Dig deeper**

1. Read I Samuel 16: 7. How does that verse challenge your own attitudes or experiences?

2. David had twenty years of wandering between his anointing and his appointing. Why didn't God immediately put him on the throne? Have you had a similar experience of delay between call and confirmation in your own life? How do we avoid losing heart?