

Early Word: Someone is Missing

Year B, Pentecost 4

By Beth Barnett

This is a Bible Engagement for 1 Samuel 15:34 – 16:13, exploring the theme “Humans don’t see as God sees. Humans look at the outward appearance; God looks at the heart”.

Use during Early Word or Bible Reading times.

<p>You will need:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of text on screen or printed, broken into sections with accompanying Art images (prepared powerpoint is included in Visions and Voices Resources Zip.) • On screen or printout pictures of various kinds of judges (or if you have a lively theatrically inclined group, some simple costume pieces to suggest various kinds of judges (legal, talent show, olympic diving, safety officer) – some examples are included in the provided powerpoint • Optional prayer extension: Cards with blue wool question mark on one side and prayer prompts (see below) on the other.
<p>Time required:</p>	<p>7 minutes</p>

As we open the Bible together today, I am looking for some judges.
Not legal-eagle judges. But judges of some other things.
I wonder what you think you might be a really good judge of?
I've got some different kinds of judges here:
Show slide of judges (or call up costumed judges)

Share with a couple of people around you what you think you could be a good judge of.

Give a minute for sharing with one another. Then gather some responses from the group - inviting various people to volunteer what they might be a judge of - and then asking there are others who are also qualified judges of that thing (e.g. Sport, talent, fashion, cooking).

Great! I wonder if you are a good judge of character, and can you judge how a person might turn out in the future?
That's a little bit harder, isn't it?

Read 1 Samuel 16:1-5. Invite someone to prepare this well ahead of time, to read slowly and expressively as you indicate the characters in the line up in the picture on the screen.

1 Samuel 16: 1-5

The LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons."

Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me." And the LORD said, "Take a heifer with you, and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.'



Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you."

Samuel did what the LORD commanded, and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, "Do you come peaceably?"

He said, "Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice." And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

So - here is Samuel - carrying a jar of oil to anoint a new king and the family of Jesse - seven sons - that's an excellent number. And the animals for the sacrifice.

So I have some judging questions.

Looking at all the people in the picture, who do you judge to be...

- 1) a future fantastic roast for the whole family (*cow or sheep*)
- 2) the future grand father of princes (*Jesse - old man with beard*)
- 3) a future field of food for a whole family (*plants*)
- 4) a future foot-solider (*Abinadab, Eliab, Shimea; any of the taller brothers see 1 Sam*)
- 5) future bullying big brother (*Eliab*)
- 6) the future father of someone who will kill a six-fingered man! (*Shimea; see 1 Chronicles 20*)

Take suggestions and reveal the answers for each of the questions above until you get to #7



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Continue...

7) future King material

Which of these characters do you judge to be good king material?

Take some suggestions, inviting contributors to share why they have judged in that way.

Samuel was faced with judging this.

It's a difficult job.

All of the seven lads are from this same good family. They have all attended the sacrifice with Samuel the prophet, and all of them are sanctified - done the ritual to be made right with God.

See the blue swirl that we have seen in the series of images over the past view weeks that signifies the voice of God in the middle of this picture - is like a question mark.

Show picture of Samuel anointing David as your reader reads

1 Samuel 16:6-10

When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, 'Surely the LORD'S anointed is



now before the LORD." 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 does not see as humans see; they look on outward appearances, but the LORD looks on the heart."

Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. He said, "Nether has the LORD chosen this one."

Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one."

Jesse made seven of his sons pass before

Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen any of these."

None of the seven brothers are the one to be anointed king.

God tells Samuel that h's not judging by their outward appearance. But what else is Samuel supposed to do?

Samuel figures out someone is missing. Someone so unimportant that they didn't even bother to invite him.

I wonder whether sometimes we overlook some people and don't notice that they are missing?

Especially if we don't think they are very important – like David's family didn't think he was important.



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I wonder whether sometimes when we are looking for someone to be part of God's plans, we don't even notice who is missing?

Let's read what happens next:

Show picture of Samuel anointing David as your reader reads

1 Samuel 16:11-13

Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep."

And Samuel said to Jesse,

"Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here."

He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. The LORD said, "Rise and anoint him; for this is the one."

Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.

Now we've got David in the picture. I wonder how we judge him?

How do we judge his:

Size?

Age?

Skills?

Manliness?

Being right with God?

Cleanliness?



Seek responses from your gathering after each category, then summarise:

He's little; he's young; he's doing the job even young girls can do. Looking after the family sheep was often a job given to girls, or the youngest boys. And he's missed being sanctified - being part of the ritual that made someone right with God. He's missed being cleaned up for the sacrifice - he's still all smelly from being with the sheep.

And yet - he's judged - number one next king.

As we look around at one another in our faith community today, some of us are little, some of us are smelly, some of us do the girl jobs, some of us haven't been around the church long - but who knows what God might choose us to do. Let's be open to the voice of God.

Prayer Extension: Choose some people to give out prayer cards to each person with a blue wool question mark swirl on one side and the words 'Humans don't see as God sees. Humans look at the outward appearance; God looks at the heart'.



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Invite people to sit quietly and listen for what God might say
pray for one person next to them with one of the lines below, or something else they
feel comfortable to pray.

Loving God, help [name] to see the things that you want them to do

Great God of all, you know [name]'s heart. Give them courage for doing the things
you want them to do.

Loving Lord Jesus, no one is forgotten or left out by you. Help [name] to know you
are always with them.



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