

# DAVID: SEEKING AFTER GOD'S HEART

MATTHEW 22:41-46 (NIV84)

Women, young ladies, and children you may be seated. I would like to ask the men, young men, students in HS and college, to remain standing for a moment. I promise not to have you stand for the whole sermon. ☺ Today, we continue our sermon series on Our Family Tree as we continue to look more closely at those who make up our extended spiritual family in the Old Testament – together, we will explore the life of David.

Men, we gather around the Word hearing a call to action for us to become spiritual leaders. Look around you, look at the daughters of God, the young kids among us. As God's daughters and sons, they are looking for us to walk alongside them, lead them, and guide them to see Christ more fully in us and through us as we become living examples of Christ at work.

In the Book of Acts, we learn that "after removing Saul, God made David their king. He testified concerning him: 'I have found David son of Jesse a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.'" (Acts 13:22, NIV84) Women, as you look upon these men and sit next to them, begin praying for and reassuring the men in your life that they are being called and equipped to lead. They are being called to be men after God's own heart.

According to the research of Patrick Morley, in his book No Man Left Behind, 40% of Christian men will divorce, more than half of us standing will be tempted by pornography, and many of us will see our children leave the church in record numbers. And yet, few of us feel equipped to face the battles of life. As men, we struggle in some way or another on a daily basis, attempting in our own strength, to overcome the difficulties. All of us will deal with issues every day that test our core values, our integrity, our manhood, and our character. We will wrestle with challenges in our lives like finances, sexual temptation, moral purity, workplace issues, our calling in life, and desiring to make our life count.

Together, we can affirm and encourage one another to grow in oneness with Christ, to spend time with Him. Together, we can develop a deeper understanding of God's Word and apply His Word to our daily lives. Look at the brothers next to you, hear God's call to lock arms in the battle; much like David did in his friendship with Jonathan. Help one another to experience and encourage accountability relationships. Spur one another on so that we strive to be all God has designed us to be.

Learning from David's examples, we can create and build habits of seeking God with all our hearts and following His lead in all we do. As we listen to God speak to us through today's sermon, may we focus on David's life, listen for ways to equip and enable one another to live out our faith each and every day. Seek God's heart for at least one other man to come alongside and grow as disciples together. You may be seated.

Last week, Pastor Jonna focused on Samuel. She shared that Israel had demanded a king and desired in their hearts to be like the other nations. God desired Israel to see Him alone as their King of kings. The prophet, Samuel warned them it would bring disaster, but the LORD granted the people of Israel their hearts desire. Sometimes God lets us learn things the hard way.

He anointed Saul, the first King of Israel. Saul was chosen by the people because he was tall and handsome. They didn't care about character, just his outward appearance. God is more interested in our hearts and the character we reveal by letting God guide our actions.

When Saul strays from the Lord, God chooses David to replace Saul. Samuel reluctantly answers God's call to seek out another king. He comes upon David's father and older brothers thinking God would choose them because they were tall, strong, and handsome. God, however, tells 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." (1 Samuel 16:7, NIV84)

Apart from Jesus, we have come to know David as one of the most central characters in the Bible. More than any other biblical character, we find that over 50 chapters in God's Word are devoted to the life of David. In addition, of the 150 Psalms, at least half, can be attributed to David. As we recognize how central David is to God's plan in bringing forth our Messiah, we can also discern that the Lord must want us to learn significantly from what is shared about his life – the good and the bad; the holiness and the horribleness.

God shows us David's character throughout the book of Psalms. We are able to see his life - all its opportunities and challenges - in full transparency. We find in David's journey of ongoing successes and failures that David was far from faultless. What God shows us through David is how our lives can unfold if we point our hearts toward God.

David follows God's will with passion and purpose. He vigilantly pursued everything God placed in His path to accomplish. He was truly a man who sought after God's own heart in every undertaking.

We find in David a man who strayed at times. During certain times in his life, God shows us how he is whole-heartedly devoted to His purposes. At other points in his journey, He falls hard as he commits some of the most serious sins that can be found throughout the Bible.

David began his journey in life in the shadows of his brothers, then following his anointing develops a deep companionship with Jonathan. He finds himself constantly on the run from vengeful King Saul, then becomes was a great military conqueror. Throughout all the twists and turns of his life, he repeatedly discovers ways to trip himself up.

David gives in to the temptation of sexual immorality for one night of passion and intimacy with Bathsheba. His actions deliver serious and dire consequences. Although David fathers two sons. One of these sons was one of Israel's greatest kings, Solomon. The other son brings about rebellion, bloodshed and grief. His life was a series of mountaintops, valleys, and pits. We see all the spiritual and emotional highs and lows that David experiences. And yet, through all of this, he was considered by God to be a "man after my own heart."

This phrase, "a man after my own heart", has always fascinated me. Why was David considered to be a man after God's own heart given all his faults? As Christ followers, what can we learn from David so we too can live our pursuing God's heart in spite of our sinful desires and behaviors?

When we look more closely at how "heart" is used in Scripture, we can find that it denotes "the most comprehensive term for uncovering our authenticity. Our heart is the part of our being where we desire, deliberate, and decide. It has been described by Joseph Stowell, president of Cornerstone University in his work, *Fan the Flame*, as 'the place of conscious and decisive spiritual activity,' 'the comprehensive term for a person as a whole; his feelings, desires, passions, thought, understanding and will,' and 'the center of a person. The place to which God turns.'"

(*Fan The Flame*, Joseph Stowell, president of Cornerstone University, Moody, 1986, p. 13)

When we look more broadly across David's life, we easily recognize his failures, he fell to temptation, he committed sin. Recognizing my own sinful nature, I am lifted up by David's example because it suggests that every one of us in here can also be a person who is "after God's own heart". We can be encouraged that as we give our hearts to God, as we grow our hearts for Christ, as we guard our hearts through the Spirit, then our Father in heaven, will guide us to be aligned to His will – making every choice and taking every stride in lockstep with Him.

As we see through David, God reveals a man who is steadfast in his faith and committed to following the Lord. Throughout his life, God tested David's faith in huge ways, and we see many examples where David falls short. But he never stops seeking God's heart even after he sins. David would repent and turn to the Lord for forgiveness and reconciliation. We see vividly how David loved God and sought to follow Him without any reservations in his heart.

He is a real-life example of what it means to be a man after God's own heart. Each of us would do well to model his desire for the Lord. God calls us, like David, to respond to Him as **give, grow, guard, and guide** our hearts towards loving Him and loving others in every way possible.

## **So How do we Give Our Hearts to God?**

We must always remember that our goal is not to “be like David.” If our goal is simply to make ourselves better, we will become very frustrated and discouraged. I do not know about you, but the thought of God examining my heart makes me very uncomfortable. Each one of us knows our own heart, our own mixed motives in life. Each one of us is painfully aware of those things we keep hidden from those around us.

We can and will learn many things from David’s weaknesses and strengths. As his life unfolds, David seeks after His Lord. We can recognize from this that the primary focus making David a man after God’s own heart rests on his total dependency for the grace and mercy of God.

The single most important thing that any of us can do is to “give” our hearts to God. If we haven’t done that then nothing else really matters. Our first step to being a person after God’s own heart is to put our trust and confidence in Christ who brings us new life. By giving our hearts to God, we receive a “heart transplant” – one that only the Holy Spirit can provide. If you want to be a person after God’s heart, you first need to become one of His followers.

## **How does God Want Us to Grow Our Hearts for Christ?**

We need to do so by putting our focus on thoughts involving the Lord. David developed a heart after God by thinking God’s thoughts, by pondering the nature of God . . . and by letting God’s greatness captivate him. Our minds always take us to think about how we look, what we want, how we feel. However, the real key to spiritual life is to learn how to focus on His desires. We need to listen to Him, learn from Him, and be in awe of His greatness. As we read through the Psalms we can see that this is what David often did. He reflected on the greatness of God. We can “grow” our hearts by allowing the Holy Spirit to guide us to his Word and as a result bear fruit for His kingdom.

## **In what ways, do we guard our Hearts through His Spirit?**

God calls us to guard our hearts by drawing closer to Him. We know if we want to maintain healthy bodies we will need to be on guard for what foods we put into our bodies. We will need to eat nutritiously, exercise, and make intentionally good choices. Our spiritual life should be no different.

In Proverbs 4:23, Solomon reminds us, “above all else, guard your heart for it is the wellspring of life.” We must be cautious about what we feed our minds, who we listen to, and where we place our attention. In Philippians 4, Paul reminds us to align our hearts and minds with the Lord by focusing on “whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.”

In *Mornings with A. W. Tozer*, one devotional shares "the neglected heart will soon be a heart overrun with worldly thoughts; the neglected life will soon become a moral chaos; the church that is not jealously protected by mighty intercession and sacrificial labors will before long become the abode of every evil bird and the hiding place for unsuspected corruption. The creeping wilderness will soon take over that heart that trusts in its own strength and forgets to watch and pray."

### **How can we guide Our Hearts and be aligned to His Will?**

God guided David to always seek to be aligned to His Will. David pursued God's guidance in all areas of his life always seeking God's heart for direction. Throughout the Psalms, God shows us how David fought through some very difficult and troubling times. He reinforces time and time again how much he loves the truth and timelessness of God's perfect Word.

We find a beautiful example of His devotion in Psalm 119:47-48: "For I delight in your commands because I love them. I lift up my hands to your commands, which I love, and I meditate on your decrees." This Psalm expresses how completely David adores God's Word.

David demonstrates for us what it means to "meditate" on God's statutes. God guided David from repentance to forgiveness, from discernment to wisdom through his times of daily meditation. We can learn from David by going daily into God's Word and then reflecting on His Word throughout the day for guidance and direction in our lives. God loves us to consider His ways in all we do. In Psalm 119:2-3, we learn from David how "blessed are they who keep his statutes and seek him with all their heart. They do nothing wrong; they walk in his ways" (Psalm 119:2-3).

We learn in the Psalms that honest self-examination will reveal to us all the ways our own sin will lead us astray. God calls us to repent and turn from our sinful ways. We may try to hide our temptations and sins from others, but we cannot keep our sins hidden from God. When we go to God with hearts of repentance seeking reconciliation, He always forgives us.

Even so, we still must live with the consequences of our sin. As we have seen throughout David's life, examples how sin leads to destruction and devastation of the lives around us. God both desires and values our faith in him. Through our ups and downs in life, the Lord seeks to give us comfort and help in every way possible.

If we remain faithful to Him; if we continue to cultivate a godly heart; God will use each one of us for His glory. He will put us in a position where we can make a difference in the lives of others.

In closing, we should ask ourselves: have we given our whole heart to God? Do we know Him personally? Are we allowing Him to guide your heart through His Word? Do we have a personal devotional time where we read and study God's Word? Do we guard your hearts and keep close accounts with God? How is our prayer life? Do we have any unconfessed sin? Are we allowing the Holy Spirit to grow the fruits of the Spirit in our lives? Finally, are we ready to respond to His call on our lives to **give, grow, guard, and guide** our hearts towards loving Him and loving others in every way possible?

Let us close in prayer using the framework from David in Psalm 51, let us pray...

*"Have mercy on us, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out our transgressions. Wash away all our iniquity and cleanse us from our sin. For we know our transgressions, and our sin is always before us. Against you, you only, have we sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge.*

*Surely we were sinful at birth, sinful from the time our mother's conceived us. Surely you desire truth in our inner parts; you teach us wisdom in the inmost place. Cleanse us with hyssop, and we will be clean; wash us, and we will be whiter than snow. Let us hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice. Hide your face from our sins and blot out all our iniquity.*

*Create in us a pure heart, O God, and renew in us a steadfast spirit. Do not cast us from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from us. Restore to us the joy of Your salvation and grant us a willing spirit, to sustain us. Then we will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will turn back to you. Save us from bloodguilt, O God, the God who saves us, and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.*

*O Lord, open our lips, and our mouth will declare your praise. You do not delight in our sacrifice, or we would bring it; you do not take pleasure in our burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are our broken spirits; our broken and contrite hearts. In your good pleasure make us to prosper here at St. Timothy's and our surrounding communities; build up the walls of our city for Your glory." (Psalm 51, NIV84)*

## **Matthew 22:41–46 (NIV84) Whose Son Is the Christ?**

<sup>41</sup> While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, <sup>42</sup> “What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?” “The son of David,” they replied. <sup>43</sup> He said to them, “How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him ‘Lord’? For he says, <sup>44</sup> “‘The Lord said to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.”’” <sup>45</sup> If then David calls him ‘Lord,’ how can he be his son?” <sup>46</sup> No one could say a word in reply, and from that day on no one dared to ask him any more questions.

## **1 Samuel 16:1–13 (NIV84) Samuel Anoints David**

**16** The Lord said to Samuel, “How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king.”

<sup>2</sup> But Samuel said, “How can I go? Saul will hear about it and kill me.”

The Lord said, “Take a heifer with you and say, ‘I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.’” <sup>3</sup> Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what to do. You are to anoint for me the one I indicate.”

<sup>4</sup> Samuel did what the Lord said. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled when they met him. They asked, “Do you come in peace?”

<sup>5</sup> Samuel replied, “Yes, in peace; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. Consecrate yourselves and come to the sacrifice with me.” Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

<sup>6</sup> When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, “Surely the Lord’s anointed stands here before the Lord.” <sup>7</sup> But the Lord said 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.” <sup>8</sup> Then Jesse called Abinadab and had him pass in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, “The Lord has not chosen this one either.” <sup>9</sup> Jesse then had Shammah pass by, but Samuel said, “Nor has the Lord chosen this one.” <sup>10</sup> Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to him, “The Lord has not chosen these.”

<sup>11</sup> So he asked Jesse, “Are these all the sons you have?”

“There is still the youngest,” Jesse answered, “but he is tending the sheep.”

Samuel said, “Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives.”

<sup>12</sup> So he sent and had him brought in. He was ruddy, with a fine appearance and handsome features.

Then the Lord said, “Rise and anoint him; he is the one.”

<sup>13</sup> 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. Samuel then went to Ramah.

## 2 Samuel 7:8–17 (NIV84)

<sup>8</sup>“Now then, tell my servant David, ‘This is what the LORD Almighty says: I took you from the pasture and from following the flock to be ruler over my people Israel. <sup>9</sup>I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men of the earth. <sup>10</sup>And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning <sup>11</sup>and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders over my people Israel. I will also give you rest from all your enemies.

“The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you: <sup>12</sup>When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. <sup>13</sup>He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. <sup>14</sup>I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with the rod of men, with floggings inflicted by men. <sup>15</sup>But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. <sup>16</sup>Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.”

<sup>17</sup>Nathan reported to David all the words of this entire revelation.