

Coram Deo
Soli Deo Gloria, Soli Deo Gracia, Soli Scriptura
Agnus Dei, Qui Tollis Peccata Mundi
Deo Volente

Sermon Preach at Stouffville United Church

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“From Loser to Ruler”

1st in the Series on David

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1 Samuel 16:6-23

During the wedding rehearsal, the groom approached the pastor with an unusual offer. “Look, I’ll give you \$100 if you’ll change the wedding vows. When you get to me and the part where I’m to promise to ‘love, honor and obey’ and ‘forsaking all others, be faithful to her forever,’ I’d appreciate it if you’d just leave that part out.” He passed the minister a \$100 bill and walked away satisfied.

It is now the day of the wedding, and the bride and groom have moved to that part of the ceremony where the vows are exchanged. When it comes time for the groom’s vows, the pastor looks the young man in the eye and says, “Will you promise to prostrate yourself before her, obey her every command and wish, serve her breakfast in bed every morning of your life and swear eternally before God and your lovely wife that you will not ever even look at another woman, as long as you both shall live?”

The groom gulped and looked around, and said in a tiny voice, “Yes.” The groom leaned toward the pastor and hissed, “I thought we had a deal.” The pastor put the \$100 bill into his hand and whispered back, “She made me a much better offer.”

David was Israel’s greatest king, the great grandson of Ruth and the forefather of Jesus, the promised Messiah. Though Israel’s second king was an extremely popular leader and exceptionally brave warrior the scripture tells us; as a person - he was rather ordinary and run of the mill.

Initially, he was easily overlooked by both his family and ignored by his community. Yet, God saw something in David that his father and Samuel the prophet missed? Where people judge others on their looks – and some studies say we make up our opinion of another within three seconds of initially meeting them – God makes up His opinion on the heart of the person.

David was an example of one who was considered a loser who rose above the crowd of talented people to be their ruler. How did this happen?

I

It happened because he knew that you have to **make your potential count**. “6 *When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, “Surely the LORD’s anointed stands here before the LORD.” 7 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.” 8 Then Jesse called Abinadab and had him pass*

in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, "The LORD has not chosen this one either." 9 Jesse then had Shammah pass by, but Samuel said, "Nor has the LORD chosen this one." 10 Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to him, "The LORD has not chosen these." (1 Sam 16:1-13)

In Jesse's eyes, David didn't measure up. He was just a kid; he didn't see the potential that was in his son. In his father's eyes he was neither a possible leader nor ruler. He looked at the surface and judged him as inadequate, and incompetent.

Webster defines 'potential' as, "something that has the promise to develop and become real!

Bernard Shaw, the winner of the 1925 Nobel Prize for literature, played the "What If" game before he died. A reporter asked him if he could live his life over, and be any person he has known, or any other person in history, who would he be? Mr. Shaw replied, "I would be the man that George Bernard Shaw could have been, but never was."

Many have heard people bemoan "What could have been"; tragic hear the words "What if", or "I regret"; or have caught yourself saying, "If I had only done things differently?" And as a result, given up too soon.

One day a stranger walked by. "Spare some change?" mumbled the beggar, "I have nothing to give you," said the stranger. Then he asked: "What's that you're sitting on?" "Nothing," replied the beggar. "Just an old box. I've been sitting on it for as long as I can remember. "Ever look inside?," asked the stranger. "No," said the beggar. "What's the point, there's nothing in there." "Have a look inside," insisted the stranger. The beggar, reluctantly, managed to pry open the lid. With astonishment, disbelief, and elation, he saw that the box was filled with gold.

Sometimes it takes a stranger who has nothing to give you and who is telling you to look inside. Not inside any box, as in the parable, but somewhere even closer: inside yourself that helps you discover your greatest treasure.

II

David moved from being seen as a loser to a ruler because he came to understand that you have to make your potential count and secondly, **make your progress count.** *"11 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." 12 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." 13 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.' (1 Sam 16:11-13)*

David did not even make his father's list of possible candidates. He was brushed off as "the youngest". On the outside, he was not one who looked like a fighter. His personality wasn't imposing, commanding or even threatening. Yet, God knew the progress David could make if he was just given a chance to improve and make progress.

So people say that it is what you know that counts. Others say that it is not what you know but who you know that counts. I say however, it is not what you know or who you know, but what you do with who you know and what you know that counts.

David knew one thing – he could play the harp. That gift he was willing to use to ease the anxieties of a leader. But it was more than what he knew – which some would think is

insignificant. It was even more than who he knew - who was very significant. It was what he did with what he knew and who he knew that counted. He offered his gift to make a difference in the life of the one who needed it. And that made all the difference.

“Marie worked at a small restaurant near Los Angeles. She waited on tables, cooked, cleaned, basically did it all. One day her boss, the owner, said that more and more customers were requesting desserts. At that time the restaurant didn’t offer any. The boss told Marie she had to come in earlier to make desserts every morning.

Her first reaction was frustration. *I already work hard enough*, she thought. *This is not fair*. But instead of getting bitter, Marie decided to accept the new duty as a challenge. She set her sights on creating the best desserts she possibly could. Marie’s pies caught on. Customers loved them. In fact, people came to the restaurant just to have a piece of her pie. Her pies became so popular that Marie decided to open her own pie company. She took a step of faith and things quickly fell into place. She found a bakery. She bought the equipment she needed. Before long, her little business began to grow and her son joined her. They opened more and more locations. Eventually, Marie Callender’s company had 110 restaurants and an entire line of frozen pies and entrees sold in supermarkets!” *It’s Your Time- Osteen p.31*

It doesn’t matter where you are right now; God has moments of blessings for you, too. You may not know how it is going to happen, but that isn’t your job. Your job is to believe as David did.

III

David moved from being seen as a loser because he came to understand that you have to make your potential, progress and finally, **presence count**. “18 *One of the servants answered, “I have seen a son of Jesse of Bethlehem who knows how to play the harp. He is a brave man and a warrior. He speaks well and is a fine-looking man. And the LORD is with him.”* 19 *Then Saul sent messengers to Jesse and said, “Send me your son David, who is with the sheep.”* 20 *So Jesse took a donkey loaded with bread, a skin of wine and a young goat and sent them with his son David to Saul.* 21 *David came to Saul and entered his service. Saul liked him very much, and David became one of his armor-bearers.* 22 *Then Saul sent word to Jesse, saying, “Allow David to remain in my service, for I am pleased with him.”* 23 *Whenever the spirit from God came upon Saul, David would take his harp and play. Then relief would come to Saul; he would feel better, and the evil spirit would leave him.*

Woody Allen once said, “80 percent of success in life is just showing up.” Yet, much of the time we don’t show up. Oh we might be there physically, but not emotionally or spiritually or motivationally.

We are told that whenever Saul was disturbed by an evil spirit, David would show up with his harp and play for him and offer relief. He didn’t just show up physically, but he showed up with the motivation to make a difference. He showed up so that his presence would count.

So often, we all just need someone or something to help us get out of our head. We allow perceived or actual failures of the past to torment us, or fears of the what might happen in the future misdirect us.

D.H. Lawrence once said, “The living moment is everything.”

And Emerson said, “With the past, I have nothing to do; nor with the future. I live now.”

Saul, had the case of the yips.

A couple years ago Simone Biles experienced during the Olympics what has been called in sports, the twisties but often is called other professions the yips. Which is a sudden and unexplained loss of ability to execute certain skills that they had previously be able to do.

“Symptoms of the yips are losing fine motor skills and psychological issues that impact on the muscle memory and decision-making of athletes, leaving them unable to perform basic skills of their sport.”

The Yipes are a state of mind that is anxious and nervous where fear can impair one's performance, judgment, or confidence.

Kareem Abdul Jabbar the NBA basketball hall of famer appeared on the TV series Billions and spoke about when he had Yips.

He said, “you would think that growing up as a Black man in 1960s America where people were trying to kill me because of the way I looked and that I had leukemia, and open-heart surgery. (If that weren't enough, I even once contracted food poisoning while co-piloting a plane from Los Angeles to Chicago.). You would think that making a hook shot – after all of that- would be easy.”

When I realized that and found his David to help him, he was able to overcome instead of throwing in the towel. He didn't give up because he said, “People like us keep after it because we know it is a crime to waste what we have. If we don't take the shot who the h...else will. You think about that.