

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

June 17, 2018



THE LESSON

1 Samuel 15:34-16:13

³⁴Then Samuel went to Ramah, but Saul went up to his home in Gibeah. ³⁵Samuel never saw Saul again before he died, but he grieved over Saul. However, the LORD regretted making Saul king over Israel.

¹⁶The LORD said to Samuel, "How long are you going to grieve over Saul? I have rejected him as king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and get going. I'm sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem because I have found my next king among his sons."

¹⁷"How can I do that?" Samuel asked. "When Saul hears of it he'll kill me!"

"Take a heifer with you," the LORD replied, "and say, 'I have come to make a sacrifice to the LORD.' Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will make clear to you what you should do. You will anoint for me the person I point out to you."

¹⁸Samuel did what the LORD instructed. When he came to Bethlehem, the city elders came to meet him. They were shaking with fear. "Do you come in peace?" they asked.

¹⁹"Yes," Samuel answered. "I've come to make a sacrifice to the LORD. Now make yourselves holy, then come with me to the sacrifice." Samuel made Jesse and his sons holy and invited them to the sacrifice as well.

²⁰When they arrived, Samuel looked

at Eliab and thought, "That must be the LORD's anointed right in front."

²¹But the LORD said to Samuel, "Have no regard for his appearance or stature, because I haven't selected him. God doesn't look at things like humans do. Humans see only what is visible to the eyes, but the LORD sees into the heart."

²²Next Jesse called for Abinadab, who presented himself to Samuel, but he said, "The LORD hasn't chosen this one either." ²³So Jesse presented Shammah, but Samuel said, "No, the LORD hasn't chosen this one." ²⁴Jesse presented seven of his sons to Samuel, but Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD hasn't picked any of these." ²⁵Then Samuel asked Jesse, "Is that all of your boys?"

"There is still the youngest one," Jesse answered, "but he's out keeping the sheep."

"Send for him," Samuel told Jesse, "because we can't proceed until he gets here."

²⁶So Jesse sent and brought him in. He was reddish brown, had beautiful eyes, and was good-looking. The LORD said, "That's the one. Go anoint him." ²⁷So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him right there in front of his brothers. The LORD's spirit came over David from that point forward.

²⁸Then Samuel left and went to Ramah.

¹Let God grant what is in your heart and fulfill all your plans.

²Then we will rejoice that you've been helped. We will fly our flags in the name of our God. Let the LORD fulfill all your requests!

³Now I know that the LORD saves his anointed one; God answers his anointed one from his heavenly sanctuary, answering with mighty acts of salvation achieved by his strong hand.

⁴Some people trust in chariots, others in horses; but we praise the LORD's name.

⁵They will collapse and fall, but we will stand up straight and strong. ⁶LORD, save the king! Let him answer us when we cry out!

THE EPISTLE 2 Corinthians

5:6-10, 11-13, 14-17

⁶So we are always confident, because we know that while we are living in the body, we are away from our home with the Lord. ⁷We live by faith and not by sight. ⁸We are confident, and we would prefer to leave the body and to be at home with the Lord. ⁹So our goal is to be acceptable to him, whether we are at home or away from home. ¹⁰We all must appear before Christ in court so that each person can be paid back for the things that were done while in the body, whether they were good or bad.

¹¹So we try to persuade people, since we know what it means to fear the Lord. We are well known by God, and I hope that in your heart we are well known by you as well. ¹²We aren't trying to commend ourselves to you again. Instead, we are giving you

an opportunity to be proud of us so that you could answer those who take pride in superficial appearance, and not in what is in the heart.

¹³If we are crazy, it's for God's sake. If we are rational, it's for your sake. ¹⁴The love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: one died for the sake of all; therefore, all died. ¹⁵He died for the sake of all so that those who are alive should live not for themselves but for the one who died for them and was raised.

¹⁶So then, from this point on we won't recognize people by human standards. Even though we used to know Christ by human standards, that isn't how we know him now. ¹⁷So then, if anyone is in Christ, that person is part of the new creation. The old things have gone away, and look, new things have arrived!

THE GOSPEL Mark 4:26-34

²⁶Then Jesus said, "This is what God's kingdom is like. It's as though someone scatters seed on the ground, ²⁷then sleeps and wakes night and day. The seed sprouts and grows, but the farmer doesn't know how. ²⁸The earth produces crops all by itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full head of grain. ²⁹Whenever the crop is ready, the farmer goes out to cut the grain because it's harvesttime."

³⁰He continued, "What's a good image for God's kingdom? What

parable can I use to explain it? ³¹Consider a mustard seed. When scattered on the ground, it's the smallest of all the seeds on the earth; ³²but when it's planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all vegetable plants. It produces such large branches that the birds in the sky are able to nest in its shade."

³³With many such parables he continued to give them the word, as much as they were able to hear. ³⁴He spoke to them only in parables, then explained everything to his disciples when he was alone with them.

Scripture quotations are from the Common English Bible. Copyright © 2011 by the Common English Bible. All rights reserved. Used by permission. www.CommonEnglishBible.com.

THE RESPONSE Psalm 20

I pray that the LORD answers you whenever you are in trouble. Let the name of Jacob's God protect you.

¹Let God send help to you from the sanctuary and support you from Zion.

²Let God recall your many grain offerings; let him savor your entirely burned offerings.