

3.19.23 – Lent 4

“Anointing of Two Kinds”

The United Baptist Church, Annandale, VA

1 Samuel 16:1-5, 10-13 (GNT)

David Is Anointed King

¹ The Lord said to Samuel, “How long will you go on grieving over Saul? I have rejected him as king of Israel. But now get some olive oil and go to Bethlehem, to a man named Jesse, because I have chosen one of his sons to be king.”

² “How can I do that?” Samuel asked. “If Saul hears about it, he will kill me!” The Lord answered, “Take a calf with you and say that you are there to offer a sacrifice to the Lord. ³ Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will tell you what to do. You will anoint as king the man I tell you to.”

⁴ Samuel did what the Lord told him to do and went to Bethlehem, where the city leaders came trembling to meet him and asked, “Is this a peaceful visit, seer?”

⁵ “Yes,” he answered. “I have come to offer a sacrifice to the Lord. Purify yourselves and come with me.” He also told Jesse and his sons to purify themselves, and he invited them to the sacrifice . . .

¹⁰ In this way Jesse brought seven of his sons to Samuel. And Samuel said to him, “No, the Lord hasn't chosen any of these.” ¹¹ Then he asked him, “Do you have any more sons?”

Jesse answered, “There is still the youngest, but he is out taking care of the sheep.” “Tell him to come here,” Samuel said. “We won't offer the sacrifice until he comes.” ¹² So Jesse sent for him. He was a handsome, healthy young man, and his eyes sparkled. The Lord said to Samuel, “This is the one—anooint him!” ¹³ Samuel took the olive oil and anointed David in front of his brothers. Immediately the spirit of the Lord took control of David and was with him from that day on. Then Samuel returned to Ramah.

Leader: These are Purifying Words of God. All: Thanks be to God!

John 9:1-7, 30-33 (NLT)

Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind

¹ As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. ² “Rabbi,” his disciples asked him, “why was this man born blind? Was it because of his own sins or his parents' sins?”

³ “It was not because of his sins or his parents' sins,” Jesus answered. “This happened so the power of God could be seen in him. ⁴ We must quickly carry out the tasks assigned us by the one who sent us. The night is coming, and then no one can work. ⁵ But while I am here in the world, I am the light of the world.”

⁶ Then he spit on the ground, made mud with the saliva, and spread the mud over the blind man's eyes. ⁷ He told him, “Go wash yourself in the pool of Siloam” (*Siloam means “sent”*). So the man went and washed and came back seeing!

³⁰ “Why, that's very strange!” the man replied. “He healed my eyes, and yet you don't know where he comes from? ³¹ We know that God doesn't listen to sinners, but he is ready to hear those who worship him and do his will. ³² Ever since the

world began, no one has been able to open the eyes of someone born blind. ³³ If this man were not from God, he couldn't have done it.”

Leader: These Words of Jesus Are Healing Water. All: Thanks be to God!

Please pray with me:

Dear Jesus, thank you for the words of Scripture to remind us that God anoints those who are often overlooked and merely tolerated. Leading and healing are two forms of purification and calling. Thank you for teaching us these lessons, and please help us to apply them to our daily lives, especially as we walk your steps to the cross. Let us experience the anointing spirit who strengthens, empowers, and heals both body and soul. Let your voice be the one heard today as you speak through mine. Amen.

Did you know that your selection of me as your Senior Minister in 2019 makes you pioneers? This is Baptist Women in Ministry (BWIM) Advocacy month because there are still churches in 2023 that choose **not** to affirm women in leadership roles, give lesser job titles even though pastorally ordained, or budget lower salaries for women on church staff. Supporting women in ministry is not meant to be a political agenda, but is a Biblical precedent; God calls and equips his people, no matter the cultural obstacles. Our spiritual gifts may be unique and helpful as were the faith and contributions of Esther, Ruth, Rahab, Deborah, Phoebe, Mary, Elizabeth, Anna, Lydia, Priscilla, and many other women of faith in the Bible. I rarely think of myself as a pioneering pastor, until I realized that I was the only female Senior Minister on the recent trip to Israel. That was never an issue, but it was an interesting awareness. I received my calling into ministry because I heard a woman preach the word of God in a way that I could understand. Thank you for your pioneering faithfulness to support the first woman pastor of The United Baptist Church, and may we invite others into this safe place of belonging and relationship so they may hear God's call.

We study David today, an unlikely young man called and equipped by God to lead the nation of Israel as king. We learn in the chapters before today's passage that King Saul continued to rebel against the Lord, so God commissioned Samuel to search for the next king of Israel. According to the Lord's instruction, Samuel was to go to Bethlehem and select a son of Jesse's to be king. Samuel did not explain his purpose to Jesse, telling them he came for the sacrifice, and invited the family to join him. As he met Jesse's older, handsome, and strong sons, Samuel was tempted to choose the physically fittest, but the Lord said no; he desired internal, spiritual fitness and strength. After rejecting seven older sons, David was called in for evaluation. The Lord examined David's heart; though his physique was smaller and ruddy (red haired), he was filled with the Spirit of God who rested on him. Samuel anointed his head with oil right on the spot! After this, Samuel went from Bethlehem north past Jerusalem, a few towns, and on to Ramah.

The historic nature of the story is not as important as the **narrative** function to convey the work of the Spirit and the Israelites. Note that this was a private anointing and sacramental act; there were no words spoken, only prayer, yet the act of anointing binds Samuel and Yahweh to David forever. Some scholars point out that David had no credentials and was the least likely candidate, yet God's spirit embraced and empowered him to become king because his heart was pure.

The second story is a healing of the blind man Jesus encountered begging as he left the fury of the crowd on the temple grounds. The timing is important because in John 8:12, Jesus proclaimed himself the light of the world, the Messiah, and the people were questioning him and

suspicious of his claim. Next, Jesus openly demonstrates his ability to heal. This unnamed blind man is usually referred to as “the man born blind.” Because he had been so, Jewish tradition assumed he, his parents or past generations had sinned by disobeying God, and this son’s condition was their punishment.

Jesus’ first lesson was to say clearly that this was no one’s fault: “³ ‘It was not because of his sins or his parents’ sins,’ Jesus answered. ‘This happened so the power of God could be seen in him.’” The blindness and healing would allow God to show his power and mercy. Jesus even broke Jewish law by making clay on the Sabbath and “working” to heal this man by anointing his eyes with the clay made of dust and Christ’s saliva. After Jesus applied the poultice, the blind man was told to go and wash in the Pool of Siloam, two possibilities shown on the bulletin cover and yes, I saw them! Interesting that we saw the lower photo just as we hiked out of Hezekiah’s incredibly dark and wet tunnel, emerging through three feet of water, down the stairs to see the pool where blindness and darkness were removed by Jesus’ healing.

King Hezekiah was afraid that the Assyrians would take over the City of David in the 8th century BCE, so he blocked the Gihon spring outside the city and diverted its water through a channel of 1750 feet into the Pool of Siloam. Half our intrepid group squinted as we came out of the tunnel, not realizing the significance until I reflected on the triumph I felt doing something so challenging. In a way, I felt new sight and insight as we gazed at the pool of healing waters, and now the same from knowing Christ’s healing work at this place 8 centuries later. Siloam means “sent” and the healed man went home able to see. The mud alone

did not heal; the man's **obedience** to follow Jesus' instruction to go to the pool completed the healing. His faith to obey healed his soul first.

The succeeding verses lay out the arguments of the Pharisees trying to understand what happened to the beggar. Then we end with the man's testimony assuring hearers that this man, Jesus, who healed him, was surely from God. This account has more impact if you read the entire chapter 9, all forty-one verses. There are other strong points to the story, but for us today, let's focus on God's merciful and miraculous healing of the blind man, who was another unlikely character "anointed" by Jesus' healing touch so that he could share his experience of God with others. Isn't that all we are asked to do to evangelize? Not preach theology, but to share about our own lives with Christ, our own miraculous and mundane faith experiences.

God, through Christ, selected a marginalized person to anoint with mud, dust, saliva, and healing water (also how God created Adam) to spread the word that Jesus is the Messiah! God chose a shepherd boy, David, to rule and be the lineage of Christ as man. Two different anointings. David was anointed to be king at about 13 or 15 years old, but did not ascend to leadership until age 30 in 1050 BCE (over 1000 years before Christ). What does that say to us? We may have been reborn through baptism at a young age, but service to the Lord is timeless and ageless. You may just now be feeling called to serve, and that is wonderful; or you've been serving God your whole life! Praise the Lord for that. More to the point today, let us continue to look for and seek out anointings and miracle healings in our everyday journeys this year. Perhaps the mud and spit combo was one of Jesus' divine experiments!

Let us bathe in God's living and healing Word through the Scriptures as we approach Easter. Amen. ||

Will you pray with me? Anointing and healing Lord, you amaze us with your power, wisdom, and mercy. Help us to become more aware of you and your work in this world as we intentionally draw near. We ask for the discipline to study your Scriptures, digging deeper to understand. We feel your presence in our church, mission center, and community, so help us see opportunities to share your anointed power and healing waters with others. In Jesus' name, we pray, **Amen.**