

Rev. Janet Doyle
Elmer Presbyterian Church
Sunday, January 30, 2022
Scripture: 1 Samuel 16: 1-13

Sermon: Looking at the Inside

On November 8, 1895, a German physics professor named Wilhelm Rontgen stumbled on a new kind of electromagnetic radiation. As he experimented with cathode rays, he noticed that a fluorescent screen that had been painted with a chemical coating was lighting up with a faint glow, even though the radiation emitter was several feet away and wrapped in black cardboard. As he continued to explore this effect, he found these rays could also pass through books and papers on his desk.

It wasn't long after this initial discovery that Rontgen discovered something else about this radiation. After his wife has assisted him in the lab by holding a photographic plate that was exposed to these rays, Rontgen noticed something remarkable. The developed photograph clearly revealed, not simply her hand on the edge of the plate, but what was inside of his wife's hand. The picture showed the bones under her skin.

Since Rontgen didn't know what type of radiation this was, he simply labeled them with an "X." So, Wilhelm Rontgen became the first person to ever see inside the human body using X-rays. Now if we simply stop and think about all of the broken bones and internal injuries that have been diagnosed and treated through the use of X-rays over the last 100 years, I'm sure we appreciate this discovery even more.

Today, we have advanced X-ray CT scans, MRI's, ultrasound technology to look inside the human body. It is all truly amazing.

This morning, as we look at our scripture lesson from 1 Samuel 16, we are going to see with different eyes as we look at the inside of people. Scripture tells us the Lord looks at the heart, not the outward appearance. This is such an important biblical principle for us to learn. We tend to look at the outward appearance of people. We are easily impressed by the wrong things because what's inside is more important than what's on

the outside. We need to see things the way God sees them. We must change the way we see our neighbors and those that we meet on this journey of life. We judge others by their appearance first and then find out who they are on the inside.

Our society is obsessed with physical appearance. Billions of dollars a year are spent on health and physical fitness and plastic surgery just to look perfect on the outside. Many times we are so focused on the outside that we miss who the person is on the inside.

When the Prophet Samuel was looking for a man to succeed Saul as King of Israel, God said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”

God tells Samuel to “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.”

Samuel arrives at Jesse’s house. This part of the story reminds me of Cinderella when all the women try on the glass slipper, and the stepsisters try on the glass slipper, and finally the Prince wonders if there is anyone else in the house to try on the slipper. Cinderella finally escapes from being hidden away upstairs and tries on the glass slipper and it fits, and she becomes the princess, and they live happily ever after.

One by one, Jesse’s sons pass by Samuel and each time God tells Samuel, “No, I have not chosen this one. No, not this one either.” Each time Samuel must have thought, “This must be the one,” especially when he gets to the last son, number seven. God hasn’t chosen any of them!

The key verse in this whole passage of 1 Samuel 16 is verse 7: ***“The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Humans look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”*** God is looking for people whose hearts are fully committed to him.

2 Chronicles 16:9 says, ***“For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.”***

When God looks at your heart, what does he see? Is your heart fully committed to him?

Samuel 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.”

So, there is another son! David, the youngest brother. As the youngest son, David was probably used to being overlooked, unnoticed, discounted. David was certainly an unlikely candidate for king.

When David arrives, the Bible tells us he was ruddy with a fine appearance and handsome features. So we know what he looks like from this outward appearance description, but that isn't what mattered; it was what was on the inside, in David's character and his heart. That is what mattered to God!

Next, we read that David was anointed by Samuel, and then filled with the Spirit. This is the first time David's name actually appears in the passage and the first time in the Bible. David is the only person named David in the Bible, and his name will appear more than 600 times in the Old Testament and another sixty times in the New.

Samuel anoints David with oil in the presence of his brothers, and David is filled with the Spirit. It was a private anointing showing God's choice of David as King. It would be many years before David actually became king and was publicly anointed.

David was a man after God's own heart. King Saul's heart was not right with God at this point in time, but David followed after the heart of God. David is the only one in scripture to be called “a man after God's own heart.”

What does it mean to be a man or woman after God's own heart? It doesn't mean that you are sinless, but that you are seeking after God, and that your heart is open to God, submissive to God, humble before God, a person of integrity and ready to serve God using your gifts and talents in harmony with God. What is important to God should be important to you. Do what God desires and walk in communion with the Lord every day.

God is still looking and strengthening those who have a heart for God, just like David.

God is in the business of growing and transforming people. He wants to help us cultivate a heart for Him and help others have a heart for God as well. Instead of a make-over on the outside, God gives us a make-over on the inside.

God is continuing to work on us on the inside every day. Remember God is working on everyone. We need to have x-ray vision so that we can see people on the inside and not just see the outside of them and judge them for what we see. We need to have the vision of God.

Our heart needs to be protected from Success, Selfishness, Sloth, Sin, and Stress. Are any of these keeping you from living for God and having a heart for God?

Former President Harry Truman used to say, "I was here by accident and I try to remember where I came from and where I'm going back to." He studied history and noted how men who were impressed with themselves were poor leaders and failed to make needed decisions.

Perhaps the ultimate test of a heart for God is: How do you handle success? The greatest test of our character is not adversity but prosperity. When things are going well in your life do you forget God? Do you pray as often? Do you recognize God as the source of your blessings?

The antidote for selfishness is the exaltation of God. Where selfishness shrinks the heart, the exaltation of God expands the heart and creates room for God.

Sloth dries up the heart. The antidote for sloth is service for the Lord. Service gives life-giving energy and power to your heart and devotion to God. Our heart is like a well. We need living water flowing through us, so our hearts do not dry up because of lack of use.

David was not perfect to serve God and we are not perfect. You don't need to be perfect to have a heart for God. We are all going to sin, and sin separates us from God and hardens our heart. But the greatest antidote for sin is repentance. Repentance changes our heart. David prayed in Psalm 51:10, "Create in me a clean heart and renew a right spirit within me." He wanted a heart that was clean before God.

Stress can break down our heart, so as we serve the Lord, we need to live trusting in God. Missionary Hudson Taylor wrote, “It doesn’t matter how great the pressure is. What really matters is where the pressure lies—whether it comes between you and God or whether it presses you nearer his heart.”

Is the pressure of life drawing you toward the Savior or pushing you away? How does your heart deal with stress? Are you drawn closer to God and trusting in Him?

Because we have Jesus in our hearts, everything is different in regard to the fact that God sees our hearts. God looks at the heart. God looks at the inside and that is what matters most to God.

God chose David as king over Saul, not based on outward appearance, but because David had a heart after God.

We need to learn to see things the way God sees them. People look on the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart.

Do you have a heart for God?