

**“Let’s Look at Things
the Way the Lord Looks at Things”
Sermon on 1 Samuel 16:1,5-13
July 23, 2006
Saint Mark's, Watertown, WI
Pastor Karl Walther**

Introduction: How Do You Size Up a New Acquaintance?

God anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts—as He did for David.... Amen.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

How do you size up somebody new that you meet?

That’s an interesting question, isn’t it? And it’s a dilemma we all face. We all meet new people, and we all formulate our first impressions of them.

Many guys, if she’s pretty, they’re instantly attracted. Many gals, if he’s nice, well, the same thing happens. If the new people you meet are older or taller or bigger, you might immediately defer to them. Among kids, I’ve noticed that it’s often the loudest new kid who gathers a few interested imitators.

But sometimes – in fact, often! – our first impressions deceive us, don’t they?

Theme: Let’s Look at Things the Way the Lord Looks at Things!

So, how do you size up somebody new, whom you meet? Well, let’s consider God’s advice in this regard.

LET’S LOOK AT THINGS THE WAY THE LORD LOOKS AT THINGS!
We’ll discover the tendency is that (1) MORTALS CONSIDER OUR APPEARANCE,
but (2) THE IMMORTAL ONE CONSIDERS OUR HEART.

Part One: Samuel Considered the Appearance of David’s Brothers

God’s Word to us today is First Samuel, chapter sixteen, verses one and five through thirteen. It begins a four-week sermon series of ours on the early life of David. And it’s written on the first inside page of the bulletin.

This brings us back more than three thousand years ago now; it’s about ten twenty-five or ten twenty BC. We’re seven thousand miles across the sea, five miles south of what would become Jerusalem; we’re in the village of Bethlehem.

It’s then and there that we read, and this starts God’s Word to us today: **The LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel?"** You remember that story. Saul was Israel’s first king. He was a king after Israel’s own heart—one head taller than anybody else. But his heart wasn’t good. He kept thinking he was right, rather than thinking the Word of the Lord was right. Twice that happened. Once, the Lord cut off Saul’s dynasty after him. The second time, the Lord cut off Saul’s kingship itself.

So, the Lord says to Samuel, the prophet: **Fill your horn with oil**, referring to that animal’s horn of olive oil with special extra ingredients, **and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king.** Literally: *I have seen among his sons for me a king.* It’s as if the Lord had made his own instantaneous talent search—and had come up with his guy to be his people’s ruler.

So, Samuel made the trip. He presented himself to the elders of Bethlehem. He announced a sacrifice. **Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.** Probably it's that Samuel made a special trip to their place, spoke a special word of benediction to them, and specially designated them as guests of honor.

Now: **When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab.** This was son number one. He would later serve as a soldier and follow Saul to war against the Philistines. Eliab was six foot five, two hundred forty-five pounds (!). No, I don't know his exact height and weight, but from what follows we do know he was outstanding in height and impressive in appearance.

So, up strides this strapping warrior, **and Samuel thought, "Surely the LORD's anointed stands here before the LORD."** "This has to be the one! Plus, he's the firstborn."

But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him"—not necessarily as one of God's people, but certainly as the leader of God's people. You see: **The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."** And that's going to be the recurrent theme here....

Then Jesse called Abinadab—son number two, another warrior who would serve in the Israelite army, maybe this one's six foot three and goes two thirty-five. **And the Lord had him pass in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, "The LORD has not chosen this one either."** Again: *Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.*

Then: **Jesse then had Shammah pass by**—son number three, six foot three, two hundred thirty, **but Samuel said, "Nor has the LORD chosen this one."**

In fact: **Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to him, "The LORD has not chosen these."** Again: *Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.*

Application One: Mortals Consider Our Appearance

So, how do people size you up when they first meet you? Well, we've just learned that first impressions can be deceptive....

If you're a gal, and the Lord has blessed you with beauty – and he's blessed all of you with some beauty – hey, be thankful. But realize, that if you don't follow up your physical beauty with beauty in your heart, people will quickly sour on you. And you get beauty in your heart from our beautiful Savior, Jesus Christ.

If you're a guy, and the Lord has given you the skill to present yourself well, be thankful. But realize, if your kindness lasts only so long as you need to get you what you want, people will see through you and get angry at you. You need Christ's sort of kindness, and that comes only from getting to know him through his Word.

If the Lord has blessed you with a little bit of height, and impressive physique, or a gracefully aging dignity, you ought to be thankful. But you need to follow that up with wisdom that comes through the Word of God—or you'll just be another cartoon character.

And how about the subject of your sizing up others when you first meet them? Well, go ahead and formulate your first impressions. But be careful! If you simply let the loudest kid – or adult! – be your leader, if you never get beyond beauty and charm, you'll follow the wrong path a very long way, and you'll get lost. Really, finally, you need Christ to be your leader—all the way to eternal life with him.

Part Two: The Lord Considered David's Heart

Well, we left Samuel with a dilemma: seven sons of Jesse, and still no king for God's people. So he asked Jesse, "Are these all the sons you have?"

"There is still the youngest—literally, simply: the little one," Jesse answered, "but he is tending the sheep." Interesting, isn't it? Like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob before him, like Moses before him: before he shepherds God's people, David shepherds a flock of sheep.

Samuel said, "Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives." Samuel is relieved and excited, knowing this is the one. So he sent and had him brought in. He was ruddy, with a fine appearance and handsome features. Six one, one seventy-five (okay, I'm making that up, but) it says here *well-tanned* and literally *handsome to the eyes* and *good-looking*—really, he'd have made People Magazine's list of most beautiful people; David would have been in the top five, and newcomer of the year.

But more significantly: *The LORD looks at the heart.* And then the LORD said, "Rise and anoint him; he is the one." 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 poured the flask of anointing olive oil over his head. God the Holy Spirit himself with extraordinary gifts came upon David; that's what anointing always brought—always brings. And he was anointed in the presence of his brothers, for three reasons—first: in keeping with Moses' words in Deuteronomy; second: very practically, so that the brothers could see the Lord had chosen him for leadership, although he was the youngest; and third: he was anointed in the presence of his brothers in the same way the Savior would be anointed from among his people.

Application Two: The Immortal One Considers Our Heart

So, you see, it's true: *Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.* That's still true today.

And what a scary thought, eh?! Imagine the Lord looking at your heart. The heart with which you were born is diseased. It's rotten. It's got blockages here and holes there. The heart with which you were born is shriveled and small and dying.

The blood it pumps out is poisoned. It's full of fatal amounts of spite and greed and perversion and hate and rebellion and ingratitude. And it makes the rest of your body look bad—bruised and abscessed, broken and rotting.

But..., but your good doctor Jesus Christ has come to your rescue. He has given you a new heart, apart from but still together with the old. It is a strong heart—as strong as Christ's heart was when he as Almighty God entered this cosmos physically for you. Your new heart is enduring—as enduring as Christ's heart was when he struggled on the cross, bearing the crushing weight of the entirety of the world's sins, also yours. Your new heart pumps out new life: as new as Christ's life when – against all the laws of nature, but in keeping with the love of God – he rose from the dead to give to us eternal life.

And the time is coming soon when Jesus will surgically remove that old sick heart of yours, replacing it completely and eternally with his new heart forever.

Conclusion: We Need to Consider Others' Hearts!

You see: *Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.* And from now on, that's the way we're going to look at things, too.

We're going to look beyond people's beauty, or their absence of beauty. We're going to look beyond people's likeability, or lack of it. We're going to look beyond people's height or weight or age or even behavior. As much as possible, we're going to consider their heart.

If we see coming from their heart evidence of confidence in Christ, we're going to rejoice; we're going to be attracted; we're going to encourage them all the more to make their old heart atrophy and feed their new heart with the vitamins of Christ's kindness.

If we see evil coming from their heart, we're going to diagnose their sickness; we're going to announce to them our heart for them and Christ's heart for them, and the availability of a transplant.

...Because God's heart is that each of our hearts dwells with him forever—as surely as Christ's heart was pierced for our transgressions. Amen.

God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power; he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him. Amen.