

CHIEF MINISTRIES

August 2018

The LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him from king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go. I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons." (1 Samuel 16:1 ESV)

In this one verse are three types of ministry: yesterday's man (or woman) – King Saul; today's man (or woman) – Samuel, to whom God was speaking; and tomorrow's man or woman – David, whom Samuel was led to anoint.

King Saul, yesterday's man, lost God's approval but still wore the crown. Tomorrow's man, David, got the anointing but without the crown. Today's man, Samuel, had to break with yesterday's man and cast his lot with tomorrow's man. It was a hard and painful word that Samuel was having to receive. It shows the sobering responsibility on the shoulders of the one who is truly today's man or woman.

Yesterday's man. I understood this to be a person who ceases to be relevant. He or she may continue to minister and say things. But such a person has somehow "lost" it – they are out of touch. They are saying the same old thing they have uttered in years gone by when it probably had some impact if not power. But it has ceased to carry weight today. Such a person often struggles to prove him or herself, trying to show their relevance. But the power is gone. In a word, such a person is a has-been although he or she is still around.

With King Saul, it was a case of losing God's approval. *"I have rejected him as king over Israel,"* God said to Samuel. And yet Saul's kingship went on for twenty more years. The anointing was given to David, who had to wait for the crown for twenty more years. But he had the anointing that mattered. Saul would continue to be regarded as the Lord's "anointed" by David because Samuel had anointed Saul as king. As long as Saul was King, David called him the Lord's "anointed" (1 Samuel 24:6; 26:9). But David had the anointing that mattered, for he had God's approval. *"From that day on the Spirit of the Lord came upon David with power" (1 Samuel 16:13)*. Saul kept an anointing, nonetheless, in two ways. First, he still maintained the Kingship publicly. Secretly, God had rejected him, and yet Saul still had the platform and influence. Second, he still retained certain gifts with which he was endowed when he had been turned into another person. God had changed his heart sometime before, as stated in 1 Samuel 10:9, and he was equipped with an extraordinary gift of prophecy. *The Spirit of God came on him with power, and he prophesied. Those who witnessed it asked each other, "Is Saul among the prophets?" (v11)*. Long after God had rejected Saul, he still had the same gift and people were still saying, *"Is Saul among the prophets?" (1 Samuel 19:24)*. This helps to explain why the apostle Paul could say, *"For God's gift and His call are without repentance" (Romans 11:29)*. In spite of Saul's high-handed disobedience, God did not take back the gifts that were bestowed upon him.

Saul's example shows how a person in a place of influence and power can still wield tremendous respect publicly but secretly be rejected by God. David's example shows how a person can have no platform but have God's approval.

I've known several men who have had some of the greatest singing gifts or musical giftings, even oratory eloquence *par excellence*. But something happened to them spiritually that indicated they weren't right with God. Ambition took over. They'd rather be heard than be men of God. Climbing the ladder became more important than revival – once their greatest passion. And yet this was not generally known of them. The public perception, the TV audience, the church-going crowd thought that they were godly, anointed men. When these men were warned, they had too much pride to hear the word of Lord about the direction they were headed. Some of them had tremendous influence on me and I deeply admired them, but I know that these revered men of God had lost something precious – a fresh anointing – but hardly anyone noticed it at the time.

One such pastor maintained his church a good number of years before it became apparent that God had departed from him and that church. He had lost the anointing that mattered. That church lost its glory in its quest for respectability. Today it bears no resemblance of its former glory.

Yet it took years before this loss of glory was widely recognized. Like a fallen tree whose leaves remain green for a while, so the absence of a fresh anointing was not evident for years.

But in God's sight this eloquent preacher was yesterday's man before the people generally would know it.

Saul's example explains how some continue in ministry and dazzle thousands, but only by that "without repentance" gifting that God graciously does not take back. Such a person may function with considerable brilliance, but he does so because the public has not discerned what God knows. And Samuel – today's man, he knew the truth. Saul was yesterday's man but functioned on and on by virtue of his prestige and position plus the "without repentance" gifts with which his calling had been endowed.

I'm reminded of several recent happenings dealing with "gifted" people in the church here in prison who have talent. But their continued falling into sin after they've been placed in a leadership position is never really dealt with. It's placated with, "Oh that's ok, brother, we all have sin and do wrong, you're in leadership, just take a little time out and everyone will forget about it and you can still do what you do because we need you". You see the gift becomes more important than the relationship with the giver of the gift, but will the blind ever open their eyes? A recent chaplains clerk allowed to hold a position because of man's decision and man's favor and man's anointing got out of prison after 20+ years only to get out, go get high on PCP and cocaine and then in the deluded state of it all, kills his own mother. Some people will say they had no idea that could happen, an impossibility because of his "position" in the church, – he was a Sunday school teacher!!! The Samuels of today and some of the David's of tomorrow knew. Yesterday's man? Clueless.

King Saul had a great beginning. Samuel had devoted himself to finding Israel's king. Saul was Samuel's discovery. Not only had God-given Saul a new heart and other gifts, but also Saul took the reins in early days, which showed an authority that electrified the people. When people were on the brink of being demoralized, Saul took charge. *And the Spirit of God rushed upon Saul when he heard these words, and his anger was greatly kindled. v7 He took a yoke of oxen and cut them in pieces and*

sent them throughout all the territory of Israel by the hand of the messengers, saying, "Whoever does not come out after Saul and Samuel, so shall it be done to his oxen!" Then the dread of the LORD fell upon the people, and they came out as one man. ^{v8} When he mustered them at Bezek, the people of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand. (1 Samuel 11:6-8 ESV)

Who would have thought that in a short time God would have to say to Samuel, *"How long would you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel?" (1 Samuel 10:1)*. At the age of 40 Saul was yesterday's man.

What went wrong? Saul began to take himself too seriously. He did not wait for Samuel to offer burnt offerings and fellowship offerings (1 Samuel 13:8-9) he went outside his anointing – he decided to offer those sacrifices. This was Samuel's prerogative alone. But Saul assumed that he, as king, could do whatever he pleased, so he did. He offered up the burnt offering. At that moment Samuel arrived. *"What have you done?"* Samuel asked (^{v11}) Saul explained, justifying himself, *"You did not come at the set time.... I felt compelled to offer the burnt offering".* (^{v11-12}). *And Samuel said to Saul, "You have done foolishly. You have not kept the command of the LORD your God, with which he commanded you. For then the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. ^{v14} But now your kingdom shall not continue. The LORD has sought out a man after his own heart, and the LORD has commanded him to be prince over his people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you."* (1 Samuel 13:13-14 ESV)

Despite this strong word it would seem that God nonetheless gave Saul a second chance. *And Samuel said to Saul, "The LORD sent me to anoint you king over his people Israel; now therefore listen to the words of the LORD. ^{v2} Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'I have noted what Amalek did to Israel in opposing them on the way when they came up out of Egypt. ^{v3} Now go and strike Amalek and devote to destruction all that they have. Do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.'"* (1 Samuel 15:1-3 ESV). But Saul took himself too seriously again. He thought his own idea of sparing "the best sheep and cattle" made better sense. Wrong!

And Samuel said, "Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams. 1Sa 15:23 For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and presumption is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has also rejected you from being king." (1 Samuel 15:22-23) Saul's second folly ratified his first flagrant act. It was upon the heels of this disobedience that God spoke to Samuel and told him to anoint the next king.

I can think of nothing worse than being made yesterday's man while I am still preaching, worship leading, or writing. We may all become yesterday's man or woman in the sense that our time to pass the truth to another generation may come. And we must die someday. But even this need not make us yesterday's man or woman. It was said of Abel, *By faith he still speaks, even though he is dead (Hebrews 11:4)*. Thousands of people of previous generations still speak to the church. But that is not what I mean by being yesterday's man or woman.

Yesterday's man or woman is one whose loss of fresh anointing is not generally apparent. A has-been in God's sight, such a person thrives with their natural skills, grace-gifts, strong personality and influential platform, and leads many people. But God has secretly decided to pass the greater anointing to tomorrow's man or woman.

It could happen to any of us. It need not happen to any of us. I'm issuing a warning to those of us in leadership that we must not take our anointing for granted. God is a jealous God. *"Be careful not to forget the covenant of the Lord Your God that he made with you; do not make for yourselves and idol in the form of anything the Lord Your God as forbidden. For the Lord Your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God"* (Deuteronomy 4:23-24)

We all think at times that we are the exception to the rule. We also like to think that we have a "special" relationship with God that means we do not always have to come under His word. This feeling stems from a self-love that is deceiving and deadly. It would be a long time before Saul came to terms with what Samuel knew and told him. Much later on he said, *"Surely I have acted like a fool and had erred greatly"* (1 Samuel 26:21). He eventually admitted, *"God has turned away from me. He no longer answers me"* (1 Samuel 28:15).

There is another way we can become yesterday's man or woman – when we are found out. Getting caught. Exposed. When our high-handed arrogance and disregard for God's word catches up with us. And yet, there is more hope for this kind of yesterday's man than when God tells us so. Getting "caught" may mean God isn't finished with us yet! Jonah was exposed by the sailors of the ship when he was trying to run from God (Jonah 1:9), but mercifully God came to him "a second time" (Jonah 3:1).

So we must not understand yesterday's man or woman to be in that sad state permanently. Saul was. Jonah wasn't. One can be put on the shelf and come back. But Saul didn't.

So being yesterday's man or woman may be a temporary state. It may mean a time of severe chastening or disciplining (Hebrews 12:6). God may set us on His "back-burner" until He deems us ready to be used again. Many have returned to a high profile in ministry having learned their lesson. Samson did (Judges 16: 24-30).

The obvious question is, "What determines the difference?" The answer, in a word, is our attitude toward His rebuke. Saul was defensive and unteachable. Jonah and Samson prayed with all their hearts for another chance – and God gave it.

David got caught for his adultery and murder after the prophet Nathan revealed the sin to him. What he did was reprehensible. But when Nathan nailed him to the wall, David took the word with both hands. Nathan said: *"Thus says the LORD, 'Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house. And I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. ^{v12} For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel and before the sun.'*" (2 Samuel 12:11-12 ESV).

This was not a very pleasant thing to hear. But David's immediate reaction was what Saul came up with too late. David said, *"I have sinned against the Lord"* (^{v13}) David paid dearly for his sin, but God wasn't finished with him. He still had a future.

David became yesterday's man only for a while. But King Saul remained yesterday's man. David was docile and tender, Saul was arrogant and hard.

The way we become yesterday's man or woman is by losing touch with God. This was Saul's error. He lost touch with God by putting himself above the word. God did not bend the rules for the first king of Israel. You wouldn't bend the rules for TV evangelists. He won't bend the rules for you or

me. His name and reputation don't ultimately ride on my success or failure. He can raise up someone else overnight to replace any of us.

One evidence that we may have lost touch with God is by imagining that we are still on the cutting edge of what God is doing today merely because we defend what God was doing yesterday. Some may think they are in the battle because they are "sound" theologically, Jonathan Edwards taught that the task of every generation is to discover in which direction the Sovereign Redeemer is moving. Then move in that direction.

We may assume God is with us today just because He was with us yesterday. God of course promised never to leave us or forsake us. But His special presence that flows from His approval is not necessarily granted. This, if I may refer to this incident again, was something Joseph and Mary learned. *"After the feast was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among friends and relatives" (Luke 2:33-44).*

We may have been raised up for a particular message or mission that God was behind in a previous day, of which has served its purpose. Some ministries outlive their usefulness. It takes an awful lot of courage and integrity to admit that a ministry may be over because it did all that it was ever going to do. John the Baptist was a sovereign vessel. But some of his followers would not expect that even he gladly became yesterday's man (John 3:26). John had the honesty to admit the purpose and temporary nature of his own anointing and urged his followers to embrace the One for whom he had been raised up to prepare people for.

We may keep a platform but lose the anointing that matters – God's current approval that issues in a fresh renewal of His glory.

I want to see revival come not only to Eastham but all the prisons of Texas. I pray that each of you find yourself as a relevant man for today! You want the anointing? Spend time with The Anointer. That was the best advice I ever received from an evangelist now gone on to be with the King.

Praying for you all to be today's man of God

Chief

If you want to know more about CHIEF Ministries or would like to be a part of this, please go to www.chiefministries.com and www.chiefshouse.org

Christ's

Heart

In

Every

Felon