

# God is Setting Up the Story

## 1 Samuel 16b // Baptism Sunday

### I. Intro → Last Week's Testimonies

- A. Today we have baptisms after the service...
  - 1. Baptism is a public declaration of faith symbolizing a believer's identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, representing cleansing from sin and new life in Christ.
  - 2. It's not a graduation certificate that you've earned, but a birth certificate showing something that was done to you
- B. But baptisms are also the culmination of a story (before... how... since)
  - 1. In each of your lives, God is writing an epic story → He is the main character, but you are still an essential part of the adventure
- C. When we read the Bible, we get to see from the divine perspective these stories unfold but realize God is doing this same thing for YOU and The ME
- D. Oh, if we could see! One day, we will. **God is setting up the story!**

### II. *1 Samuel 16:14–23, [14] Now the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul*

- A. In the OT, God would send his Spirit temporarily for a purpose
  - 1. Craftsman, Prophet, King
- B. In the NT, God's Spirit is at work, and when someone is born again, it takes up residence within him to stay.
- C. Eph 1 says that the Holy Spirit is a deposit of future inheritance and a seal.
  - 1. Like an engagement ring or a wax signet on a scroll
- D. So in the OT, the Spirit comes and goes w/ a purpose, but in the NT, if you are a believer, you have been given the HS as a seal and promise of your future hope
  - 1. This is one reason why, at Revolve, we don't believe a person can get "unsaved." → if your salvation is real, it's real to stay; safe deposit
  - 2. He who began a good work in you will finish it (Phil 1:6)
- E. So, in the NT, we see:
  - 1. The work of the Spirit (to convict, teach, power, etc.)
  - 2. The regeneration of the Spirit (to effectively give rebirth)
  - 3. The indwelling of the Spirit (to live within us now that hearts are purified)
  - 4. The sealing of the Spirit (guaranteeing your future hope)
  - 5. The filling of the Spirit (filled with power for God's purpose) → this is closer to what we see in the OT
  - 6. All believers are INDWELT, but they are not always FILLED.
- F. How can you be filled with the Spirit? SWAP your will for God's
  - 1. S - A posture of **surrender** in your heart; "Your will be done..."
  - 2. W - **Wait** on the Lord in prayer and the Word (Let the Word dwell...)
  - 3. A - **Ask** the Lord to fill you and root out sin in your life
  - 4. P - Obey the **prompts** of the Spirit

III. *[14] Now the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and a harmful spirit from the LORD tormented him.*

- A. *"This is more than the pangs of an uneasy conscience. God permits a demonic spirit to attack Saul so that he is periodically drawn into a vortex of depression and plagued by irrational anxieties and jealous fear."* → ESV Exegetical Comm.
  - 1. Ok. What do we need to know?
- B. **God is the Authority:** God is the Creator of all things, including the spiritual realm, which means He has ultimate authority over all spirits, both good and evil
  - 1. *Colossians 1:16 says, "all things were created through him and for him."*
- C. **God Gives Evil a Fence:** Evil spirits operate under God's constraints. They cannot subvert His ultimate purposes and are limited in their power.
  - 1. This isn't "Yin & Yang"; Satan in Job; demons in gospels
- D. **God Leverages the Unseen:** God sometimes uses evil spirits as instruments of His judgment or discipline, as seen with Saul or in 1 Kings 22:19-23
  - 1. God can exploit evil spirits to serve purposes within His redemptive plan.  
Eg. The cross is good and evil
- E. **This Doesn't Diminish God's Holiness:** Although God is sovereign over evil spirits, He remains holy and righteous. He is not the author of evil, but in his sovereignty, he can bend these things to accomplish his plans
  - 1. Think of it like a king who has evil in his kingdom. Just because the evil exists doesn't mean the king is evil. He WILL destroy them.
- F. **Christ's Victory:** Jesus Christ's death and resurrection declare God's ultimate victory over evil; they are subject to Christ's authority (Ephesians 1:20-21).
  - 1. Christ has all authority, and we are commissioned w/ his authority
  - 2. The indwelling Holy Spirit provides a safeguard for believers
- G. **Future Judgment:** Evil spirits will face final judgment and destruction at the end of time
  - 1. "You can run on for a long time, but sooner or later, God'll cut you down."
- H. Something more... We get hung up on the details for obvious reasons (God sending an evil spirit makes us uncomfortable), but the real point is that **God is setting up the story**. He is creating a situation that will need a solution.

IV. *[15] And Saul's servants said to him, "Behold now, a harmful spirit from God is tormenting you. [16] Let our lord now command your servants who are before you to seek out a man who is skillful in playing the lyre, and when the harmful spirit from God is upon you, he will play it, and you will be well." [17] So Saul said to his servants, "Provide for me a man who can play well and bring him to me."*

- A. Saul's servants diagnose the root cause here and offer a suggested solution.

V. *[18] One of the young men answered, "Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, who is skillful in playing, a man of valor, a man of war, prudent in speech, and a man of good presence, and the LORD is with him." [19] Therefore Saul sent messengers to Jesse and said, "Send me David your son, who is with the sheep." [20] And Jesse took a donkey laden with bread and a skin of wine and a young goat and sent them by David his son to Saul. [21] And David came to Saul and entered his service.*

- A. Remember when I said that **God was setting up the story?** Funny that. We have a solution...
    - 1. Nobody knows that this is the guy who is going to replace him one day
    - 2. But God is literally moving people to accomplish his purposes
    - 3. He is creating tension so that he can relieve tension
    - 4. He is creating issues so that he can send solutions
  - B. **Skillful...** He's a gifted musician (primary requirement here), but what else?
  - C. **Man of valor...** We see later David killed a bear and a lion (rumors spread)
  - D. **Man of war...** If chronological, David hasn't fought yet, but this means he is fighting age and should be able to hold his own if someone busts into the throne
  - E. **Prudent in speech...** Doesn't mean he is well communicated, but that he is discrete and won't go running his mouth about Saul (integrity)
  - F. **Good presence...** He's good looking → won't be a troll in your court
  - G. **Lord is with him...** All that is an impressive resume, but only one thing matters → THE thing that separates Saul and David... the ANOINTING of the Holy Spirit
- VI. *And Saul loved him greatly, and he became his armor-bearer. [22] And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, "Let David remain in my service, for he has found favor in my sight." [23] And whenever the harmful spirit from God was upon Saul, David took the lyre and played it with his hand. So Saul was refreshed and was well, and the harmful spirit departed from him.*
- A. God gives David a supernatural ability to calm Saul down, and Saul immediately is attached to him.
    - 1. This initial favor is going to be juxtaposed against Saul later wanting to kill him repeatedly and underscores the tension David feels in his heart.
    - 2. They are developing a legitimate relationship here.
    - 3. David sees Saul at his worst and knows that the man is pained and powerless to stop it → God is sowing compassion in David for the future.
- VII. Here's the point: **God is setting up the story!** Follow me...
- A. God creates tension in Saul's life
    - 1. Holy Spirit departs, evil spirit oppresses
    - 2. Saul's mental and emotional state deteriorates
    - 3. This creates a crisis that needs resolution.
    - 4. Need for Relief
    - 5. **God is setting up the story!**
  - B. Enter David... who God has been preparing...
    - 1. Earlier in the chapter, Samuel anointed David, but this anointing is still secret, and David's public rise needs to begin.
    - 2. All that time with the sheep has given David the skill and passion for music...
    - 3. **God is setting up the story!**
  - C. David and Saul
    - 1. I don't know if you've ever known someone with mental illness, but it's heartbreaking to watch

2. You feel completely powerless to help; as frustrating as it can be, it also breeds compassion.
3. Put yourself in David's shoes → you see this king, regal and strong before the crowds, but he's like a little child when tormented.
4. But when you play... he feels relief
5. Imagine the compassion that is in his heart, the pity.
6. This establishes a bond between them, and you HAVE to realize this is one of the reasons David will be so patient later as Saul seeks his life.
7. **God is setting up the story!**

D. This is also positioning for the Goliath Episode next chapter!

1. An armorbearer, a friend, a trusted member of the court
2. This gives David credibility and rapport
3. Did you ever wonder why Saul would ALLOW a little shepherd boy to fight Goliath on behalf of the nation?! This is why!
4. **God is setting up the story!**
5. God is preparing David and Saul so that when the moment comes, the stage is set.

E. This is divine preparation:

1. God uses David's time in Saul's service to prepare him for greater challenges.
2. God is developing compassion, faith, courage, leadership, etc
3. **God is setting up the story!**

#### VIII. **God is setting up YOUR story!**

- A. He's setting up YOUR story too.
- B. Think about the dominoes that were set up for you to get here TODAY
- C. He prepares us through adversity and suffering for what comes next...
  1. **God is setting up YOUR story!**
- D. He develops our skillset for things that aren't even on our radar.
- E. Did David play the lyre because he was bored in the field or because he wanted to do musical therapy?!
  1. **God is setting up YOUR story!**
- F. He strategically positions you in situations and places that you do not fully grasp until the time is right.
  1. For example, an experience of suffering can be instrumental in our growth and future impact.
  2. **God is setting up YOUR story!**
- G. He places you in relationships TODAY that he wants to use for his kingdom purposes later → divine networking, leveraging the world for the kingdom.
  1. **God is setting up YOUR story!**
- H. As you are faithful with the small, incremental steps of the story, God will build character and integrity in you → faithful in little, faithful in more.
- I. He is developing you now (if you allow him) to prepare you for the next stage
  1. **God is setting up YOUR story!**
- J. There is so much more than what we can see

1. Tapestry flipped around → all glory will be to Christ
- K. While you are in the thick of it, remember that preparation time is not wasted. God is setting up the story for you to be used for his glory the same way that he did for David
1. His timing is better than yours
  2. He knows the skills you need to develop
  3. He knows the relationships that you need set in place
  4. He has a plan, and it's a good one.
  5. **God is setting up YOUR story!**
  6. You can TRUST him in the process and not panic.
  7. This is why the Bible says BE STILL and know that I am God and I WILL be EXALTED among the nations.
    - a) I don't want to be still, God. I want to reach the nations NOW...
    - b) God is setting up the story, Bill, and his ideas are better than yours
- L. What do we do in the meantime? SWAP our will for God's will
1. **S** - A posture of **surrender** in your heart; "Your will be done..."
    - a) God's timing is not your timing. Surrender to his leadership!
    - b) Give him the blank check and trust him
  2. **W** - **Wait** on the Lord in prayer and the Word (Let the Word dwell...)
    - a) Wait for marching orders as revealed in the Word and prayer
    - b) Don't move until he moves. Speak what he speaks.
  3. **A** - **Ask** the Lord to fill you and root out sin
    - a) We are commanded to be filled by the Spirit... ASK
    - b) Ask God to make you more like him, root out sin, challenge you
  4. **P** - Obey the **prompts** of the Spirit
    - a) When God speaks, when he gives an opportunity (playing the lyre for Saul, fighting Goliath), → obey it!
    - b) But you can't hear the commander and chief's orders if you haven't done the first three steps.
  5. **God is setting up YOUR story, so SWAP your will for his, and watch him work!**