

Spiritual Anointing

1 Samuel 16

Life in HD: Soul and Spirit message 4

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READ 1 SAMUEL 16

As I read, there is a “pivot point” in this passage, a decisive spiritual swing. When I get done, I’m going to ask you where you think that critical, dividing moment is in this passage. That verse – it’s actually two verses which are back to back – involves David and Saul, soul and spirit.

PRAYER

All right, any guesses as to which the two key consecutive verses are? —the ones that give us the interpretive key to the passage, wherein two different spiritual directions, desires, and destinies become crystal clear?

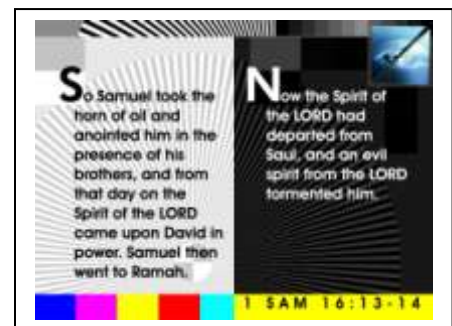
You’re right . . . here are the two verses:

13. 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 then went to Ramah.

14. Now the Spirit of the Lord had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord tormented him.¹

The Holy Spirit comes upon David. And leaves Saul. This is crucial stuff and to give you a sense of how key this is, I want to tell you stories. The first story is about the Holy Spirit coming into my life. The second story is about the Holy Spirit leaving the life of a dear friend of mine.

First, my story. I had been a Christian for just under two years. To be honest about it, I was seeking God to a degree but still pretty much had my hand on the steering wheel of my life. But, without question, I had asked Christ into my life.



¹Or *injurious*; also in verses 15, 16 and 23

¹*The Holy Bible : New International Version*. 1996, c1984 (1 Sa 13:11-12). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

The story I'm going to tell you about took place in Greensboro, NC. I was out of college and teaching tennis. One day as I was heading out to hit still more tennis balls, the folks I was a renting a room from stopped me and asked me to come into the kitchen. They asked me to sit down and said they wanted to pray for me. I thought to myself, "Humor the old people". (I was a very humble guy.)

As soon as they laid their hands on me something spectacular began to happen, and I still don't fully grasp all the significance of that moment. Very quickly God was there. The room became semi-white. And I was filled with an overwhelming joy that was so intense I almost felt as if the joy was going to split me apart and I was going to die. I believe that I was experiencing just the tiniest fragment of God's own joy.

At the same time I was out of my chair . . . pushed? Fell? I don't know, but I get a little something of Paul in Acts 9 when Jesus showed up and Paul fell off his horse. And, suddenly I had a new language. An incredible language. It was powerful. Racing. Exuberant. And, while I didn't understand it, I did understand the amazing power and joy I was experiencing.

The irony still gets me . . . I was a cerebral, unhappy young man determined to find his own way. That essential attitude in my life still lingered even after I found Christ. And then this cerebral young man found himself in the midst of a spiritual experience that went way beyond anything the intellect could grasp and whose joy planted a light down in my spirit that even now – 30-some years later – is still there. Pulsating. Powerful. Giving joy. Strength. Life.

And power.

Spiritual power.

Just like it says here in 1 Samuel 16:13 . . . *Samuel poured the oil on David and the Holy Spirit came upon him in power.*

In a few minutes, I am going to give you the opportunity to pray and have God do a similar work in your life.

Second story.

Maybe three years later, Helen and I – we had in the interim met and married – were living in California. I was in divinity school, studying for the ministry. You know, Greek. Hebrew. All that stuff.

And I had a friend. A friend who had been important to me and who had been one of the first people in my life to point me towards Christ. I was something like 25 at that time and he was 31. I lived in California. He lived in Kansas City.

And one day I felt the Lord prompt me that I needed to get on a plane and go and see him. I felt strongly about that and so, even though we didn't have much money, Helen and I bought the plane ticket and I went.

I still remember our meeting. He had, just a few years earlier, been so vibrant for Jesus Christ. He and his wife loved the Lord and loved serving him together. But, in the meantime, love of the world had begun to take over his life. Increasingly he was compromising his faith and was on the edge of very deep sin. Whereas before the joy of the Lord radiated from his life and simple love for Christ defined him, he was now darkening, complex, troubled, burdened . . . it was more than having committed sin. Sin can be atoned for. It was that he was persisting in sin. And, even deeper, he was falling in love with the world. With money. With success. With power.

Things were changing in his life. Spiritually changing. And not for the better.

Halfway through the meal, as we talked, I looked across and the table and spoke directly to him, I think with the unction of God. I said, "The Holy Spirit is leaving your life."

He looked back at me and said, "I know."

I tell you those two stories in order to illustrate what's in the passage, in these two short verses, and what we are going to go High Def on today. It's very simple. The Holy Spirit can come into your life. And He can leave.

I can think of nothing more important to know than how you welcome him in your life. And you keep him there.

Let's talk about Saul and the Spirit departing, and then let's talk about David and the Spirit coming.

1) The Spirit Departing

The irony existing between 1 Samuel 16:14 (*Now the Spirit of the Lord had departed from Saul*) and 1 Samuel 10:9-10 is dramatic:

As Saul turned to leave Samuel, God changed Saul's heart, and all these signs were fulfilled that day. When they arrived at Gibeah, a procession of prophets met him; the Spirit of God came upon him in power,²

Here's a really important question. How does that happen? Or, maybe you put it this way, how did it happen in Saul's life and what can I learn from it?

²*The Holy Bible : New International Version*. 1996, c1984 (1 Sa 10:9-10). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

There are three key events in Saul's life which are critical to this departure of the Holy Spirit. Two of them we've looked at. One of them we haven't. Let's take them in order.

First of all, 1 Samuel 13. Do you remember the story? Samuel told Saul to go to Gilgal and wait there for him. For how long? Seven days. And how long did Saul wait? 6 ½. And what did Saul do? After 6 ½ days, he took matters into his own hands and moved into battle without the God-ordained prophet by his side.

When Samuel confronted him, how did Saul respond?
You get that answer in vss. 11-12:

Saul replied, *“When I saw that the men were scattering, and that you did not come at the set time, and that the Philistines were assembling at Micmash, ¹²I thought, ‘Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not sought the LORD’s favor.’ So I felt compelled to offer the burnt offering.”*³

He justified self and shifted blame. In other words, he made a bad situation worse. So what's the first takeaway from Saul's life? It's sort of like this. If you want to get to the place where the Holy Spirit starts to withdraw, then do the following:

- **Fail to wait on God. Take matters into your hands. Be impetuous.**
- **When confronted with your sin, don't own it.**

Okay, that's story #1. Story #2 is a passage we didn't look at and that we don't have time today to deal with, but it's pointed. 1 Samuel 14 records the battle that Saul prepared to fight on his own in 1 Samuel 13. God intervened, largely through Saul's son Jonathan, and Israel won a great victory. As they fought, Jonathan discovered some honey on the ground and took a quick scoop of it in order to keep his strength up. What he didn't know was that his dad (Saul) had decreed that no one eat during the battle. Furthermore, what he didn't know was that Saul decreed that anyone who did so would have to die.

After the battle, while everyone was celebrating, it came out that Jonathan had unknowingly eaten during the battle. How did Saul respond? He prepared to execute his own son. Jonathan was saved only when Saul's army stepped in and said, "Absolutely not." He doesn't deserve death.

What do you learn about Saul? It's very simple. He was prone to issue commands that may or may not have been unreasonable but whose consequences were definitely

³*The Holy Bible : New International Version*. 1996, c1984 (1 Sa 13:11-12). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

unreasonable. The death penalty for eating some honey is way out of line. Why would Saul do that? The only reasonable explanation is that he was a tyrant. After all, what does a tyrant do other than issue lots of order and then start chopping off heads? And why do tyrants behave that way? They're afraid of losing power. After all, why do you think Saddam Hussein murdered a couple of his own sons?

The spiritual point? If you want to drive the Holy Spirit away, then do the following:

- **Be unreasonable**
- **Be harsh**
- **Be fear driven**

I think that's an important point for us dads to remember, because I think we all can go there . . . laying a down a bunch of laws with our families that may well be overkill and then punishing in the extreme. We can all be tyrants, can't we?

The third story is the one we looked at last week. It's the story of Saul and the Amalekites, his failure to carry out God's commands completely, his willingness to let Agag the king live and to allow his men to take the best of the sheep and goats. I won't re-preach last week's sermon but here's the takeaway. If you want to make the Holy Spirit unwelcome, then do the following:

- **Live in partial obedience.**

(Look, here's the deal. Rather than being a Saul and working so hard at trying to find a way around God's "no," why not be a David and learn to live joyfully within God's "yes"?)

- **Deal with lesser sins but not the major ones (the king).**
- **Build monuments to yourself.**

And, the biggest issue in the whole thing, verse 11 of 1 Samuel 15 . . .

- **Let your heart grow cold towards God.**

I've heard it said that the Holy Spirit is a Gentleman. He delights to come into our lives, but He won't force his way in. Where He is welcomed, He stays. Where He is unwelcome, eventually He leaves.

And, by the way, one way to start down the journey in that direction is if you notice that your instinct is to apply checklists like this to people rather than to yourself. James 1:22-25 makes that clear.

So, I don't know how else to say it about Saul. He lost his zeal – his spiritual desire – for God. Everything began to unravel from there.

O God, keep us forever in Your grip we pray.

Prone to wander, Lord, we feel it, prone to leave the God we love. Take our heart, Lord, take and seal it, seal it for Thy courts above.

2) The Spirit Coming (Upon)

All right. Now let's turn to David. Different story. Entirely. Let me prophesy over you for a moment . . . you may have a good lick of Saul in you, but God is at work calling forth the David in your life.

Here's where we all are apart from grace . . . we live by soul. That is, it's about our thoughts, our will, our feelings. We are led around, not by the nose, but by self.

But here's this thing about God. He's different than you and me. As the Bible says:

⁸ *“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways,” declares the LORD.* ⁹ *“As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.”* ⁴ (Isaiah 55:8-9)

So, it's all about recognizing that God is different. Therefore, I've got to take myself and submit myself. I already have this thing called a soul . . . it's my mind, my will, and my emotions. Here's what I have to do . . . I have to decide to submit my soul to my spirit. Submit myself to that part of me where God's Holy Spirit lives. Even Jesus did this. Do you remember His prayer . . . ***“Not My will but Thy will be done.”***

So, even if there's been something of a 1 Samuel 16:14 story in your life . . . even if you've walked like Saul and God's Holy Spirit is moving away from you . . . you can change that. You can become more like David. And when you do, you begin to welcome God's Spirit back into your life.

⁴The Holy Bible : New International Version. 1996, c1984 (Is 55:8-9). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

What do you want? An evil spirit? Or the Holy Spirit? Yes, despite all the complexities and nuances of life, it is that simple.

Let's look at David, examine what we see in 1 Samuel 16, and ask the question, "What is it to welcome the Holy Spirit?" Prepare to be surprised.

- **Be willing to be unlikely.**

Catch this dialogue between Samuel and God . . .

6 When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, "Surely the Lord's anointed stands here before the Lord." 7 But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at."⁵

Some of you need to apply this verse to yourself. You can come up with all the reasons as to why God wouldn't want you. You're not tall enough. Good-looking enough. Short enough. Young enough. Old enough. Thin enough. Smart enough. Educated enough. Experienced enough. Interesting enough. Well-spoken enough . . . the list goes on and on, doesn't it?

What does the Word say right here . . . "**God does not look at the things man looks at.**" When God's Holy Spirit came upon me I was young, dumb, a punk, attracted to sin, still halfway into sin, a college dropout, an embarrassment to my family . . . the list goes on and on. But here's the thing. Paul stated it in 1 Corinthians 1:27 . . .

Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. 27 But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. 28 He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, 29 so that no one may boast before him.⁶

So here's the first thing. If you want to welcome God's Holy Spirit, be a target for the landing place of God, you need to be willing to be unlikely. You need to forget about all those disqualifiers and instead be hungry for God.

⁵*The Holy Bible : New International Version.* 1996, c1984 (1 Sa 16:5-7). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

⁶*The Holy Bible : New International Version.* 1996, c1984 (1 Co 1:26-30). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

- You need to be willing to be forgotten

Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to him, ***“The Lord has not chosen these.”***¹¹ So he asked Jesse, “Are these all the sons you have?” “There is still the youngest,” Jesse answered, “but he is tending the sheep.”⁷

It has to be okay with you that others might forget you. Said differently, the backside of a mountain has to be an okay place with you. Doing small things – like tending sheep – though doing them with a large heart has to be okay with you.

Our world is preoccupied with impressive resumes. What impresses God is the heart. I’m reminded of Brother Lawrence, the kitchen worker in France who scrubbed pots and pans every day for 54 years. Talk about the backside of a mountain . . . a kitchen. But he wrote that he “he would even pick up a piece of straw because of his love for God.” He knew that it wasn’t about doing big things; it was about having a big heart. He knew that the size of the task didn’t matter but the intent. God looks at the heart, and so anything done for the Lord, for the sake of the love of God, is to Him enormous because, again, the Almighty and All-Seeing One does not measure the task nearly so much as He measures the heart.

- You must willing to be a child.

You know that Jesus said this, right? ***“Except you are converted and become like this little child . . .”*** Unless you put away the cynicism of life and become willing to trust the Lord . . . Unless you are willing to be tender rather than tough, innocent rather than jaded, dependent rather than self-willed . . .

When David came to Samuel, he was a young boy. Let me call forth from you the hopeful optimism of youth. It was nothing to do with age. You can 18 and be very old – I was there once. You can be 80 and very young. It’s not a state of mind. It’s a state of spirit.

Let me give you another take on this “child” thing. David didn’t have the illusion that he was someone great. Orlen said something in our worship planning meeting which I think is huge . . .

God is not looking for those who want to be great men or women of God. (Surprised?) God is looking for those who are willing to be men or women of a great God.

⁷The Holy Bible : New International Version. 1996, c1984 (1 Sa 16:10-11). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

■ You must be willing to come to Samuel.

I find this striking. This amazing, divine gift of the Holy Spirit coming upon David and giving him power . . . it came from God, but it came through a man.

This is the way it usually works. When the Holy Spirit came upon me, a man and a woman laid hands on me. I was seated in their kitchen. I was imperfect in so many ways and so unlikely a candidate, but here's one thing I did . . . I responded to the Samuel in my life.

Do you know what you and I want? We want the anointing of God without the people of God. I don't think it works that way. Listen to an email I sent out Friday afternoon to the guys in my Dads Life Group:

Dads Life Group Guys:

Okay . . . so I was reading and praying through 1 Samuel 16. It's the story of Samuel anointing David with oil and the Spirit coming upon David in power. At the same time I was thinking about tomorrow AM's meeting of the Dads Group (8AM, Hardee's on Great Bridge Blvd in Chesapeake . . . as always).

Here's what the Lord quickened in my spirit as I thought about how David actually connected with Samuel the prophet. The Lord spoke into my spirit the following prophetic insight . . . "To get to the oil you have to get to the prophet." Now that's cool . . . and important.

Here's the application. All of us want and need the anointing of God's Holy Spirit to be the Dads and Husbands we want to be. We know that. But, to get to the oil you have to get to the prophet. In other words, just as David had to connect with the flesh and blood of Samuel in order to receive the oil of God's Holy Spirit, you and I have to connect with one another to receive the anointing to be Dads. Sure, what we need comes from God, but I'm struck by how often the stuff God gives us comes through the agency of other people—even more to the point—from other people who themselves are carrying the oil of God's Holy Spirit with them as Samuel carried around his horn full of oil.

So . . . you are David. You need the anointing to be a dad. (Good luck doing it on your own.) And . . . the group is Samuel. (Jesus has promised to be in our midst wherever two or three of us are gathered together in His name . . . so the group is the horn and the oil is the Presence of Jesus in our midst.) Just as David got the anointing of the Holy Spirit through the flesh and blood of Samuel, so you and I will receive the anointing to be Dads through the flesh and blood of one another and, in this case, our Dads Life Group.

I don't trust the walk of people who pull away from the Body. Why? The anointing is in the Body. In the Church. God's Holy Spirit comes from heaven but resides in believers. Truly Spirit-filled people, truly anointed people . . . know this. They connect with the Body of Christ, the Church, for two reasons. First of all, they know that they need the ongoing

ministry of the Spirit and so they press into Christian relationship. Be suspicious of the drive to pull away.

Secondly, they press into the Body not only because they seek to receive the Holy Spirit, but they also desire to give the Holy Spirit. Check out this verse:

- **Fill your horn with oil and be on your way. . .
(1 Samuel 16:1)**

Huge verse. Samuel had oil to give. Why. Because he had first received the oil from God. Here's an anointing God wants to give to you. Let me give it to you in story form. This week I spent some time with someone who was hurting. Earlier that morning, as I thought about and prayed through my day, the Lord spoke to me very simply and said, "Anoint them with oil." I got it. I had spent time with the Lord. In prayer. In reflection. In His Word. God gave me the oil, the Presence of the Holy Spirit in my life once again for that day. I was then to pass on that Presence to others. Do it through reading the Word with them. Do it through godly counsel. Do it through prayer over them, including prayer for life's hurts. And, literally, anoint them with oil and have the audacity to believe that just as God showed up in David's life when Samuel anointed him with oil that God would do the same in this person's life as I anointed them. Not because of me, but because of Jesus Christ who freely gives.

- **Carry your harp with you.**

Do you remember the last half of 1 Samuel 16? We read it about half an hour ago. Saul has been tormented by an evil spirit problem and his attendants tell him to send for David because he's so great playing the harp.

Now this is shortly after David is anointed. In other words, David was still a kid, fresh off the backside of a mountain with the sheep. So . . . how did he get so good with the harp? And singing songs that would send the demons away?

Guess what he did with the sheep? That's right. He played out there in the middle of nowhere. And he was good at the harp because he was good at worship. Look, it wasn't the music that drove away the demons, it was the worship which attracted the presence of God and so evil had to flee. If only Saul had gotten beyond welcoming David to instead welcoming the Holy Spirit.

That's another key to welcoming the Spirit in your life. Become a David. Become a worshipper. Listen, Saul is a spectator. David initiates. Saul was willing to be in worship. David wanted the worship in him. Are you getting it? You don't have to be a great singer. You just have to have a heart to respond to God's Presence. That's one of the huge keys to welcoming God's Holy Spirit. Becoming the target of God, the landing place of the Almighty.

(By the way, a good way to carry your harp with you is to listen to worship CDs and memorize hymns.)

- **Cultivate a heart after God's own heart.**

This statement about David doesn't come from 1 Samuel 16 but 1 Samuel 13 when Samuel first told Saul that while he would remain king, he would have no dynasty. Samuel prophesied saying, "***the Lord has sought out a man after his own heart.***" The contrast, of course, becomes crystal clear two chapters later when God speaks to Samuel and tells him that Saul "***has turned away from following me***" (1 Samuel 15:11).

We are going to see this again. David desired God. And David's heart – the center of his being – was in a lifelong pursuit of God. David loved God. Wanted God. Wanted what God wanted.

And in one of the very significant trends we will see in David's life is where David went when trouble abounded. He didn't go to the bar. Didn't consort with all the various, worldly forms of distraction. David went to God.

So, if you want to attract God's Holy Spirit into your life . . . cultivate a heart after God's own heart. Pursue God . . . his heart. His ways.

3) The Miracle of the Holy Spirit

I want you to get what a miracle the gift of the Holy Spirit is. In Luke 11 Jesus was preaching to a group of very ordinary people, and He said the following:

¹¹ "Which of you fathers, if your son asks for^f a fish, will give him a snake instead? ¹² Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? ¹³ If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"⁸

This is the famous "ask, seek, knock" passage. Now Jesus was speaking to a group of Jews. I think they would have stunned at what he said. Some might have been offended.

Here's the way it worked in Old Testament times. A few chosen people got this gift of the Holy Spirit. Kings . . . people like Saul and David. Great warriors and important people like Samson. Prophets like Samuel. In any given generation you could count the number of people who were empowered by the Holy Spirit on one hand.

^f Some manuscripts for bread, will give him a stone; or if he asks for

⁸*The Holy Bible : New International Version*. 1996, c1984 (Lk 11:11-13). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

But Jesus said . . . “Ask, seek, knock . . . “if you then being evil give good gifts to your children how much more will your Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?”

The people listening to Jesus weren't kings. Or prophets (other than John the Baptist). They were just ordinary people . . . in fact, they probably thought of themselves as less than ordinary. The religious leaders largely despised them and the Romans who ran things politically and militarily largely dismissed them. It's likely they believed, at least in part, that the leaders were right, and they were of no account. We tend to take into our souls what others think of us.

But here's what the Bible says about people like this. We read it earlier.

“But God has chosen the foolish things of this world to shame the wise, the weak things of this world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised thing – and the things that are not – in order to nullify the things that are.” (1 Cor 1:27-28)

Ah, sweet Jesus. Sweet plan of God. That He would look at ordinary people and give them – to us – not only Christ, but if we ask for it, He would give to us the gift of the Holy Spirit. You and I – dear friends – can have the anointing of kings.

I cannot turn away from or ignore the profound contrast – and hope – that we find in 1 Samuel 16. I see double good news. Even triple. First of all, God gives the Holy Spirit to them that ask. That's the story of David. Secondly, God ministers to Saul—even though he is deeply troubled and tormented—through David's worship as he plays his harp. God does not completely abandon him. Even then I have to believe that God was calling Saul back to himself. If only Saul had listened and let his heart be melted.

Thirdly, the truth of the matter is that we all have a bit of Saul and David in us – though we are seeking to press in the direction of David – spirit rather than unsubmitted soul. I suspect that at least to some degree we identify not only with the Holy Spirit promise of vs. 13 but the evil spirit troubling of vs. 14.

You see, you can be both unlike Saul and like Saul at the same time. You can be unlike him in that Holy Spirit has in no way departed from your life. You can be like him in that evil in some form – yes, a demon – troubles you if not torments you. Who doesn't wrestle at times with fear, despair, temptation, anger, bitterness . . . as God said to Cain, *“sin is crouching at your door”* (Genesis 4:7).

Here's one of the key lessons of 1 Samuel 16 . . . the anointing of God's Spirit is more powerful than the tormenting of Satan's demons. Press into the Holy Spirit – whether it is through David's harp or Samuel's preaching. We all – and always – need to be re-anointed. God gives, and gives again.

When Samuel anointed David with Holy Spirit it was no small thing. He smeared the oil on David. Poured it on him. Wiped on him. Covered him. The fragrance would have been sweet, and lovely, and intense.

This is God's will for you – no matter what trouble you may have seen. Ask Him. Ask Him now. Ask Him today. Come forward and we will anoint you with oil and believe that – either for the first time – or for the 100th time – that God's Holy Spirit will come upon you in power. And love. And sweetness. And goodness. And joy. And peace.

In the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.