

TEXT – 1 Samuel 16:1-13

Introduction: It's a deep freeze throughout the country. In central and southern Florida, farmers are spraying their citrus crops with a protective layer of ice to insulate them from the cold. Waves of Arctic air are pushing deep into the South breaking records for continuous cold temperatures. Many Southern homes aren't built to handle this kind of cold. Pipes are bursting and heat pumps, not furnaces, are running all the time just to keep things barely comfortable. On Tuesday in Miami the game-time temperature for the Orange Bowl between Georgia Tech and Iowa was 49 degrees, a record low for this annual game. We're used to cold weather here in Wisconsin. People move south to escape the cold and now they are experiencing it too. It's sort of an anointing of freezing temperatures for people who aren't used to living with that kind of continuous cold weather. Our text this morning recalls a different anointing, the anointing of David as Israel's next king. This anointing of David reminds us that we too are anointed as Christians. WE ARE ANOINTED BY THE LORD. Our anointing means that 1) the Lord chose us by his grace, and also that 2) the Lord gave us gifts to serve.

I. The Lord chose us by his grace

- Samuel was one who was chosen or anointed by God to be judge, prophet, and priest for God's people. He wore numerous hats in his job description as the Lord's anointed. He was the one God called to anoint the first king of Israel, Saul. Samuel was also sent to anoint Saul's successor, although he did not know who that next king would be.
- King Saul, the Lord's anointed, had failed to be a faithful king. The Lord was grieved that he made Saul king. So he sent Samuel to Bethlehem to anoint the next king of Israel. Samuel went to Bethlehem really for two reasons. One reason was to offer a sacrifice in which he would invite Jesse's family as the Lord commanded him. The other reason was to anoint the next king of Israel whom the Lord would indicate.
- This was a very troubled time in Israel. Saul knew God was angry with him and would someday give the kingship to someone else. Samuel was concerned about what would happen if Saul found out about this mysterious trip to Bethlehem. The townspeople of Bethlehem were on edge when Samuel showed up. They must have wondered if this was good news from God's prophet or bad news. That's why they asked Samuel, "Do you come in peace?"
- It was good news. There would be a sacrifice to the Lord. At the sacrifice the Lord revealed to Samuel the next king of Israel. It wasn't the oldest son of Jesse Eliab. It wasn't Abinadab or Shamah. It wasn't any of the first seven sons of Jesse. It was the youngest David who was out in the field tending sheep that the Lord had chosen.
- The explanation the Lord gave to Samuel was, "Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." David is referred to in the Bible as a man after the Lord's own heart. David's heart by nature, a sinful nature, was no different than any of his brothers' hearts or our heart. David himself was the one who wrote, "Surely I was sinful from birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me."
- The Lord chose David as a man after his own heart because the Lord by his grace had changed David's heart. The Lord changed David's heart to believe God's gracious promise of the Savior that would take away all his sins. David wrote in Psalm 32, "Then I acknowledged by sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the LORD' – and you forgave the guilt of my sin."
- The Lord also by his grace through his Word worked into David's heart a strong desire to serve and worship his Savior God with his whole life. David put his full trust in the Lord when he fought that impossible battle against Goliath assured of his anointing as Israel's next king. Despite numerous opportunities David did not kill Saul as the Lord's anointed king, even though Saul was pursuing David to kill him. At the same time David was a sinner. He committed adultery with Bathsheba and murdered her husband Uriah to try and cover it up.
- We are by no means any different. We are here as the Lord's anointed, chosen by his grace to believe in him and to serve him. There is nothing good in us that caused God to choose us to be his children. We agree with Paul – "I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature." God chose us, anointed us to be his children by his grace alone.
- By God's grace the Lord not only picked us from the massive lot of sinful humanity to be his children, he then brought us to faith in Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit. You and I are spiritual miracles of the Spirit. We are spiritual freaks of nature because by God's grace as sinners the Holy Spirit has brought us to faith in Jesus through the gospel so that through Jesus as our crucified and risen Savior we are forgiven and righteous and holy and heirs of heaven.
- We have received a spiritual anointing, which in most cases occurred at our baptism. From that moment on our life has changed. We are not the sinners we once were with only one agenda – to sin as much as we could get away with. That has changed. Anointed by the Spirit to trust in Jesus as our Savior we still sin but it angers us when we sin. We know our sin hurts God and others too. We repent of our sin and are comforted with God's forgiveness in Christ. We struggle daily to resist temptation and pray earnestly for God's help and guidance to do what pleases him.
- We realize that we are by no means immune to very grievous sins as David learned firsthand when we let our spiritual guard down and take our faith for granted. Our spiritual anointing by God's grace is to be what we are as God's children. It is now our life's ambition and goal to remain faithful to that calling by strengthening our faith in Jesus daily through God's Word.

Transition: As David was anointed to be king, we too are anointed by the Lord to be his children. This anointing occurred as the Lord chose us by his grace. In this anointing the Lord also gave us gifts to serve.

II. The Lord gave us gifts to serve

- What a day this must have been for David. As the youngest brother he was left out in the field tending the sheep while the rest of the family took part in this special sacrifice. When he was told to come in from taking care of the sheep he was anointed by God's prophet Samuel. The Lord told Samuel, "Rise and anoint him; he is the one."
- One big question remains. Did anyone at the sacrifice know why or were they even told why David was being anointed by Samuel? This question we cannot answer specifically from the text. Later it would be revealed to everyone that David would be the next king of Israel. What we do know is that by this anointing the Spirit of the Lord came upon David in power.
- Let's consider this young man David who was anointed by Samuel. David we are told was a nice looking young man, even though the Lord did not choose him because of his handsome appearance but because of what he had worked in his heart. David was musically gifted as a harp player and lyrically gifted having written most of the psalms in our Bible. He was also very athletic as a brave warrior, one of the best fighters in all of Israel. David was likewise a good Christian friend to Saul's son Jonathan.
- In the verses right after our text we are told that David served in the royal court playing the harp for Saul who was tormented by an evil spirit. This was important training for David as he would succeed Saul as Israel's next king. We would say that David pretty much had it all. Yet all these gifts would be useless unless they were used in service to the Lord.
- In his anointing David received a special gift of the Holy Spirit to use his talents and abilities in service to the Lord. Most, if not all, of these talents and abilities David already possessed, but now these gifts were spiritualized in a special and powerful way by the Spirit to be used in service to the Lord.
- We too have many gifts and abilities that the Lord has given us. These gifts come from our parents and grandparents passed down through our genes. Some of us have awesome musical abilities. Others are athletically gifted or very handy and able to fix whatever needs fixing. Some of us have great people skills and are able to encourage and help quite a number of people with their problems and struggles in life. God gives to some leadership skills and to others the gift of service being available to help with just about anything.
- Our anointing being brought to faith in Jesus by God's grace also spiritualizes our talents and abilities. Now we use them in service to the Lord. We serve the Lord by being involved with a committee at church or helping with various projects and activities in the church. We serve the Lord with our particular spiritualized gifts even when we come to worship as we gather together to encourage each other in our faith by sharing God's Word and singing his praises.
- It's important that all of us use our gifts to serve the Lord. That allows so much more to be done for the Lord. On a football team when only the eleven players on offense are working hard and doing their best that team will not win many games. What about the defensive players, the special teams, kickers and punters, and the practice players that help the starters to improve and get ready for the next game? What about all the coaches who prepare their players to play as well as owners and general managers who are always looking for quality players to help their team?
- The Lord's work is seriously hampered when only a few are using their talents and abilities in service to the work of Christ's kingdom. It's a shame to see those spiritual gifts, spiritualized talents and abilities that are all set and ready to go through the anointing of the Spirit, being wasted. Laziness, lack of time or busyness, timidity, not knowing where to serve or how to get involved – are all good worldly excuses. But it's the Lord's work that suffers.
- Like David we have been anointed with the Spirit in a special way. We are so blessed not only to have faith in Jesus but also to be gifted in our own unique way by the Spirit so that we can serve our Savior. It truly boils down to loving service, to serving the one who served us and loved us so much by giving his life on the cross to save us from our sins. Jesus himself reminds us, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Conclusion: I'm sure people in the South are not too appreciative of this Artic blast. Farmers are worried that they will lose their crops. Homeowners are fearful of pipes bursting and not being able to keep warm. Any snow and ice in that region of the country basically shuts down cities and towns. It's no fun for those who are used to warmer weather to be anointed with such a blast of true winter. We are much more appreciative of our spiritual blast, a heart-warming blast of God's love in Christ that chose us by his grace to be his own and then also gave us gifts, spiritual gifts to serve him. May we like David make the most of our spiritual anointing to serve the Lord though imperfectly now but one day perfectly in heaven. Amen.