

# Little in Thine Own Sight

by Keith Malcomson

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*This sermon emphasizes the importance of remaining humble and small in our own eyes before God. It highlights the downfall of King Saul, who started as a humble man searching for donkeys but later became proud, leading to his rejection by God. The message warns against the curse of bigness, where pride and self-importance can lead to spiritual downfall and rejection by God.*

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**Scripture:** 1 Samuel 15:17, Proverbs 16:18, James 4:6, Psalm 51:17, Luke 18:14

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## Description

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## Transcript

I want you to turn here tonight to 1 Samuel chapter 15. I'm going to read a few verses. My text is verse 17 but I want to read a few verses around it.

We're on our series of the little things of Scripture. We've already looked at various things. We're on part 5 and I want to bring you to something little that impacted me when I was little and I want to tell you maybe this Scripture left its mark upon me as much as any Scripture outside of John 3 16 in the entire Bible.

I believe this Scripture indelibly rooted itself upon my mind, my heart, my life, my actions, my decisions, my relationships, my ministry and all that I do here. It had such an impact yet it's a little thing that we're dealing with. Never think little things aren't important.

You will have a train wreck, a car crash. You will destroy your life and make shipwreck of your faith if you think little things don't matter. My message tonight, little in thine own sight.

Reading from 1 Samuel chapter 15 and verse 16. Then Samuel, that is Samuel the prophet, said unto Saul, stay and I will tell thee what the Lord has said to me this night. And he said unto him, stay on, be careful when you tell God, speak to me.

Be sure that you want to hear it. And Samuel said, when, look at that word, when, when thou wast little in thine own sight was thou made the head of the tribes of Israel and the Lord anointed thee king over Israel. And the Lord sent thee on a journey and said, go and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites and fight against them until they be consumed.

Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the Lord, but didst fly upon the spoil and didst evil in the sight of the Lord. And Saul said unto Samuel, yea, I have obeyed the voice of the Lord and have gone the way which the Lord sent me and have brought Agag, the king of Amalek and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people, it was them, not me, it was them.

But the people took up the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in Gilgal. And Samuel said, hath 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 hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.

Because thou has rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king. Let's pray here tonight. Father, we thank you God that you do not despise those that are broken and a contrite heart.

Father, as we search the scripture and study the Bible, we find that you're a God that looks towards the heart of man, not just his actions, not just his reputation, not just his words, but you look upon the heart. You're not a man, you're not like man who looks at the size and the height and the stature and is in awe of words and of achievements. You look at the motives of the heart, you look at the agenda behind words.

You are a God who searches the deep things of a man's heart, his motive for God, the reason for saying things, the reason for deciding things. Lord God, thank God tonight. You're a God who does not despise the broken and contrite heart.

If you can find someone broken, you look towards them, you listen to them, you are moved with compassion. If you can find a heart that is contrite and lowly before you, you are drawn towards that heart. In searching after little David, you said you had sought for yourself a man after your own heart.

Lord God, I thank you, God, that you are a God who deals with hearts. You care about the inward man of the heart. Lord God, tonight I pray, O God, that we might be little in our own sight, that we might see ourselves as you see us, O God, that we might not be blinded to see in you because we are filling our own vision with ourselves, our own pretensions and our own thoughts.

Lord God, I pray tonight that you'd bless us in Jesus' mighty name. Amen. My fifth message on this series of little things is the title, and it's straight from Scripture, from verse 17, little in thine own sight.

Verse 17 again, and Samuel said unto Saul, when, that means it's not so now, when thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the Lord anointed thee the king over Israel? This is our title here tonight, little in thine own sight. This is a scripture that was indelibly printed on my mind. I'll never shake myself free from it.

I'm going to carry it to the grave, to my last breath. I didn't learn it from a preacher. I didn't learn it from my personal reading of the Bible.

I didn't learn it in Sunday school, having to learn and memorize Scripture. I didn't learn it from any of those realms. Do you know where I learned this Scripture? Do you know who taught me this Scripture? Do you know who repeated it so often that it become a part of my character and nature and who I was? It was my own mother.

When I was a little boy, my mother used to speak this Scripture to me, when thou wast little in thine own sight. Speaking about King Saul, the great anointed king that defeated all the nations, defeated all the armies, was a great soldier and leader, a great man in his generation, and yet he comes to a point where God has to say, when you were little in your own sight. It's no longer true.

Your attitude, your character, your vision of yourself has so changed that there was a day I anointed you and used you and blessed you and raised you up. Do you know why God done that? Because you were little in your own sight. But I have cast you away.

I have rejected you. I'll never speak to you ever again to the day you die. I won't touch you.

I won't help you. I won't encourage you. You know why? Because you're no longer little in thine own sight.

Do not tell me that whether you are little in your own sight matters or not. It's a little thing, but it's a vital thing. Do you realize how you look at yourself before God will affect whether God turns his back on you or turns towards you? Do you realize that? Do you realize you could have such a wrong vision of yourself, of your own attitudes, your own words, your own actions? You could be so misconceived, caught up in religion, and yet you could have it so wrong that God rejects you.

You see, this little scripture so impacted my life. It dominates me here tonight. I am not preaching a sermon.

I'm preaching my conviction. I'm preaching my experience. I'm preaching to you what I believe.

I'm preaching what I've looked at and seen all through my life. That when thou was little, I anointed you, I used you, I blessed you, I spoke to you, I drew near to you, my heart was towards you. But as soon as you lost that, you lost everything.

Can you believe that such a little thing is such an important thing, such a major thing, that whether you're little in your own eyes or not is going to make such a difference with God? You see, you could say it doesn't matter how I look at myself. It doesn't matter whether I'm accurate or not. It doesn't matter whether I've got big inward attitudes about myself or not.

I want to tell you, it does. It does. This scripture proves that it does.

And so my message is, little in thine own sight. It's a scripture. It's a word from the Lord.

It's a message for a man who lost something that was little and very precious unto the Lord and he never regained it again. To lose this, you may never get it again. To actually have it and walk in it and yet play with it and mess it up, you may never be able to get back to a point and experience it again.

God help us tonight. I've got three things I want to give you tonight from this verse. First of all, a definition of littleness.

A definition of littleness, an explanation, an understanding of what it means to be little in your own sight because it's so valuable. Do you realize sitting here and especially those younger in the faith, this is going to mark your whole life, whether God uses you or not, whether God blesses you, whether God speaks to you about your future, whether he moves and sends you the right partner in life or not, you could get the wrong partner and I assure you, you do not want that. You want the right person in a marriage.

It could all hinge on this decisively. So a definition of littleness, what does it mean to be little in thine own sight? The word little here, used here, it means to be small. And notice this, it is Saul at a certain point in his life, as he looked at himself, it's his vision of himself, it's his understanding of himself, it's his perception about himself, it is his belief about himself, it's how he looks at his choices and actions and words.

You know someone once said many years ago, there's three you's. We in the North use the term you's, plural. Many of you's don't.

You lost it along the way somewhere. But we use you and you's in order to define that. Now I forget what I was going to say.

But a man once said, he said there's three you's. There's the man you think you are. There's the man others think you are.

And this goes for the ladies as well. And there's the man God knows you are. All three of those could be radically different.

And so what is the definition of littleness? What does it mean to be little in your own sight? The word little there, and it's used over a hundred times in the Old Testament. Can I give you a key to understanding a word in the Bible? Either in the Hebrew of the Old Testament or the Greek New Testament. Do you know how you understand a word? You take this little word, little, and in your strums you go through the hundred explanation, 100 verses where that word is used all through the Bible over a period of thousands of years.

And as you read each one of those words, you come to understand that word. That's infallible teaching. And that's how through the years, mainly that's been my main way to understand a word in the Bible.

How it's used by the Holy Spirit and the context and the situation. So this word little, it means small. It can mean unimportant.

It can mean the least in comparison to everyone else around you. It means to look upon yourself as of no real account. Now I know this contradicts everything that goes on in our world and in the church.

We talk about having a good self-esteem, a high self-esteem. Do you know the Bible never teaches that? You can't even initially come to God unless you realize you're unworthy, you're a sinner, you've messed up, you deserve hell. You don't come to God saying, I'm quite a good guy, quite a nice guy.

Do you know I've got a lot to commend myself. I've got a lot of gifts to offer to God that he's going to be really chuffed that he got me. He really does deserve me.

Do you see how attitudes can be very strong things? How we perceive ourself, you would be shocked what lurks in your own heart. And only as the Holy Spirit deals with you as a Christian, things come up in your heart and you go, I can't believe that's in my heart. As you learn the word of God, you begin to see things about yourself that shocks you and God begins to open it up.

And so we understand this word, it means to be unnoticed. Saul, while you looked at yourself as someone deserving not to be noticed, passed over. Have you ever been passed over and it didn't shock you? I mean, you didn't notice it.

They passed out. Well, why would they have noticed me? And then have you been in another situation where someone didn't mention your name or notice you or say hello or make something of you? You're devastated, you're annoyed, you're hurt. How could they do that? I'm such an important person.

They didn't all stand up for me when I walked into the room. I mean, what's wrong with them? This little word actually means, and listen this carefully in Strong's Concordance, the little word little means to be abbreviated. Do you know what that means? Condensed down to its smallest form.

It means diminutive. In other words, to cut off, cut back, or to cut down to size. You ever heard the term being cut down to size? It means to reduce down to its lowest limits, to reduce in size significantly.

You may think I need a good self-esteem, I need to feel better about myself. The Bible doesn't teach that. It actually shows all through that when you're at your smallest position, your weakest position, your most fragile place, when you're the least, when you say there's no reason for me to be noticed, and I'm shocked that God would even take note of me.

Do you know what? That is one of the best places you can possibly be, and yet we fight against it. Just think of the whole teaching of the Bible with everyone God ever used. In 1 Kings 3 and 7, it's Solomon speaking, and he says, of David my father, and I am but a little child.

I know not how to go out. This is Solomon, the greatest king of his generation, and he said, I'm but a child. Previously in 1 Samuel 17 and 18, listen to what David his father said.

Who am I? What is my life or my father's family in Israel that I should be the son-in-law of the king? He's going to become the greatest king in world history. King David, everyone knows him. The greatest king who ever reigned on a throne, and yet here he is out of his heart.

He's not being humble. He's not putting something on. He's not trying to obey scripture.

This is coming out of his heart. He said, who am I that I should even be the son-in-law of the king? Then what about Gideon in Judges 6? And the Lord looked upon him and said, go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel. Do you know what he actually said? I am the least.

I think you've made a mistake here. There's something wrong here. This is what Gideon, a man who's going to save the entire nation, and God said, thou mighty man of valor, go in this thy strength.

What was his strength? He said, but I'm the least. You shouldn't use me. I think you've, angel, I think you came to the wrong door.

Are you sure you shouldn't have went to my neighbor? Or what about Ruth in chapter 2 and 10? Then she fell on her face and bowed herself to the ground and said unto him, why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger? Ruth become one of the ancestors of Jesus Christ. And here she is going, I don't deserve to be brought in like this. Or Hosea chapter 13 and 1, when Ephraim speak trembling, we think that's a bad position.

He exalted himself in Israel, but when he offended in Baal, he died. See when you're trembling and scared, God could exalt you. You lost that and he had to reject you.

Proverbs chapter 18 and 12, before destruction, the heart of man is haughty. And before honor is humility. The way up is the way down.

You want to be the greatest, you must be the least. When you go into someone's house, don't take the highest seat, go for the lowest. You know why? If you go and sit in the highest seat, and there's Jesus teaching this, he says, someone's going to come along and go, excuse me, you're not the most important person coming tonight.

And you're going to get very embarrassed and ashamed and maybe offended because they'll say, do you mind sitting over there? It's better to sit at the very lowest seat. And for someone to say, why are you sitting there near the door? Come on up near the fire. This principle is all through scripture.

In Luke chapter 14, 11, whosoever exalteth himself shall be a beast. And he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. In ministry in the church, I've rarely found these Christ teachings in operation, rarely in my entire lifetime in ministry.

Everyone says they believe these things, very few do. 2 Samuel 9 and 8, and he bowed himself and said, what is thy servant? This is Mephibosheth. What is thy servant? David's coming to bless him.

What is thy servant? That thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am. All through scripture, John the Baptist, who is called the greatest, the greatest of all the Old Testament saints. There was none greater than John the Baptist.

You know what he said? He, Jesus, must increase, I must decrease. Or 1 Corinthians 15 and 9, listen to the great apostle Paul, for I am the least of the apostles. And I'm not made to be called an apostle, I'm not worthy.

Oh, come on, Paul. Because I persecuted the church of God. And Ephesians chapter 3 and 8, Paul says, unto me less than the least of all saints is this grace given that I should preach among the Gentiles, the unsearchable riches of Christ.

Do you know, I would dare say any individual who's really been used of God or is being used of God has the same heart. And if you ever lose that, you're finished. I don't care if your ministry gets bigger.

I don't care if you become more famous. I don't care if you think you're more useful and more eloquent and more wise and more knowledgeable and more mature. If you lose this, you are finished.

I would rather have a man who is shaking and trembling and reaching one soul for Christ, and he's got this, than a man out there preaching to tens of thousands who doesn't have this. It saturates scripture. What does it say again? When thou was little in thine own sight.

What a mistake you made, king Saul. You lost this. Why do you think I chose you to be king and anointed you to be king and raised you up and give you power to destroy the enemies? Why do you think I done that? Because of this hard attitude.

That was the reason. It wasn't just a sovereign act of God. You know, those who overemphasize the sovereignty of God make a lot of mistakes, as well as those who overemphasize man's responsibility.

We believe both. And so if you think God just sovereignly chooses and sovereignly uses and your heart doesn't come into it, you're contradicting the Bible. God himself through Samuel is saying, when you had that heart, I done all of these things.

But now I've got to reject you because you've lost that and it's your fault you've lost that. If you're a big man in your own eyes and own heart and in your own thinking, that's your fault. If you think you're perfect and always right and better than everyone else, you've got a real problem.

I mean, you've got a massive problem. And not only that'll cause a problem in life, but it causes a problem with God. You know, God, what does he do with the proud man? Resists him.

Some people wonder why God is resisting them. Pride could be a reason. God has obliged himself by his own truth to resist a proud man.

Remember what it says in Proverbs 3 and 7, be not wise in thine own eyes. You should be wise. We're told to grow in wisdom.

You're to gain wisdom. You should be wise. You're commanded.

And yet if you're wise in your own eyes, if you're there proud of your wisdom, you've got a real problem. And yet you've got to have wisdom. Here you have, you've got to be little in your own eyesight, but it doesn't mean you're stupid or blind to a gifting or ability or a calling or to what God has done.

You once considered yourself unimportant. Now you think you're important and I can't use you. You once thought yourself insignificant, the least of everyone in God's kingdom.

Now you think you're very important and ought to be used by God and you deserve to be used by God. What a tragedy. That's my first point.

A definition of littleness. Do you understand what it means? While you were yet little in your own sight, I anointed you. I brought my Holy Spirit upon you.

I chose you. I separated you out to a very special task, but you've lost all of that. Number two, that's a definition, but number two, the greatness of littleness.

Can I say that again? The greatness of littleness. This isn't talked about much in the church, in sermons, in Bible studies, in general Christian life. The slabber all over you and tell you how wonderful you are.

And this is good. If we can build up your self-esteem, you're going to be an excellent person. But you rarely hear what the Bible says, that real greatness is in littleness.

It says, when I was little in thine own sight. What is the greatness of littleness? Let's for a few moments here, go back and look at Saul. When did God say he was little in his own eyesight? What does it look like in King Saul? Where did God first find King Saul? Because if you can go back and look and find out why did God choose him? Why did God say, I'm going to anoint him? Why did God raise up this nobody to change the entire nation to be the first King of Israel? If you can find out what littleness looks like, you're going to find greatness.

Let me just take you there for a moment. 1 Samuel chapter 15, 17, we see he's lost it. So you've got to go backwards to chapter 9, to the first mention of Saul, and he's not King, he's Saul.

And as you go back there, you begin to discover true greatness. True greatness is not in chapter 15, he's lost it. In chapter 9, everybody knows him.

In chapter 9, nobody knows him apart from his own family. In chapter 15, he can deliver a nation. In chapter 9, he can't even find donkeys that are lost.

In fact, chapter 15, he is considered by all successful. And yet in chapter 9, he seems to be a failure and a simple nominal family task. What a contrast.

And yet where is true greatness? What is success? You see, when you compare chapter 9 to chapter 15, it's the same man within a short period of time. Man thinks he's a nobody at the beginning, yet God takes note of him. Everybody has taken note of him in chapter 15, and yet God turns his back on him.

Do you see how dangerous this is? That you could think, think and you stand, you'll fall. Take heed to yourself. When you're ministering to others, you take care of your attitude, lest you think in your help and others.

And look at that person, you could fall into the same thing. Be very, very careful. And so the second point, the greatness of littleness, it's back to front.

Chapter 9 in verse 3, look at the first sight of this man called Saul. And the asses of Kish, Saul's father, were lost. Where do you find him? Looking for asses, donkeys.

And Kish said to Saul his son, take now one of the servants with thee and arise, go seek the asses. He's being given instructions by his dad to go look for donkeys. You want to see a great man.

You want to see the essence of greatness. You want to see what a heart looks like that looks at itself and your little and your own eyes. Here it is.

You sure you want to go down this path tonight? And as he passed, so he went on the journey, as he passed through Mount Ephraim and passed through the land of Cilicia, they found them not. And they passed through the land of Shalom and they were not there. And he passed through the land of the Benjamites, but they found them not.

Three times in this one verse, we read he did not find the donkeys, the asses. Three times repeated. He looked for him here.

He looked for him there. He looked for him everywhere, but he couldn't find the asses. Look at this man who's a nobody.

He is small in his own eyes. He's unnoticed in his own eyes. He's quite happy to be small in his own eyes.

And he's looking for donkeys. He's searching for his father's donkeys. Look at him at the beginning, a low position and happy to serve in it.

He's serving his own father. He's obedient to his own father. He is faithful in natural things.

Do you think you can be unfaithful, big in your own eyes in the home, in the local church, and yet you, God's going to take you further? Look at the marks of littleness. He's obedient. He has respect for his father.

He is very thorough. He's looking everywhere for these donkeys. He doesn't say, well, my dad can't see me.

I mean, hey, servant, you just make sure you say the same as me. Well, we looked, couldn't find him. We came back.

You've got lots of asses. Sure, it's fine. You've got money to burn.

It's okay. He had stick ability. He looked to every single area.

And I want you to see this with this man. Do you know what God's eyes are upon him? He is a donkey looker after. He's a searcher after donkeys.

And you know what God is looking at him saying? That is my man. Can you believe this? What is there to commend a man looking for his father's donkeys? And yet it draws the attention of God. Don't you despise the little things you're doing? The workplace, the home, the little issues of life, your attitude towards father or mother or children or family members or church members.

Do you realize God is looking at that? And it will define everything. Everything. God is looking at this man searching for donkeys.

And he said, that's the man to beat the first king of Israel. I find this shocking. Why? He's little in his own eyes.

He thinks nothing of himself and it draws God's attention. There's a thing called providence. It's not a word used in the Bible, but it's to explain the little normal things of life.

How God's hand is upon them. You just go down the street or you meet someone or you're talking to someone or you turn a corner and God's hand is there. It's not the thunder and lightning and a voice from heaven or an angel or a miracle.

It's God working in normal things of life. That is called providence. God uses normal incidents to bring about big, massive changes in world history.

There's an old saying that says big doors swing on little hinges. You've got two little hinges on most doors and you can have a big heavy door and it's swinging. No one stops to inspect the hinges most times.

Unless there's a few of you. It's quite strange and you get in there saying, what sort of hinges on this door? But we don't notice the little hinges. We see the big door.

Don't you realize it all depends on that little hinge? That's providence. You don't realize that little things in life will change the whole direction of your life, will change your destiny and the will and purpose of God. It's a remarkable thing.

And so three times it says in this verse, he did not find the donkeys. You know what that is? It's disappointing. Are you disappointed tonight with something in your life? You're going through the normal things of life and you're disappointed.

I can't even find these asses. I've trudged all over these hills. I've searched diligently.

He was disappointed. I'm sure he was frustrated. It's a fruitless task.

It's useless. He wasn't successful and yet God's plan is in it. Do you realize all this searching going here and there and nothing happening? Do you realize God was in this and God was choosing him and yet he didn't realize it? Do you realize how many things you may not even realize God is in? You counted as nothing to just bump into a stranger.

Candice got a new nurse today assigned to her. She sent me a little message and said, well, such and such a nurse is being assigned today. She's going to be the next one to receive the gospel in that hospital ward.

I think she's an Indian lady. Said, I'm going to tell her the testimony of Pandita. You don't know who that lady is and you think it's of no consequence.

It's more important than your health. It's more important than surviving illness. That lady, a lot could hinge on that one lady, but we don't live like that.

We see ourselves, I'm too important. I ought to be doing other things and you could miss some of the most important things in life. It's remarkable.

And so God is working in normal things, causing them to seek after these donkeys, but he's leading them somewhere. He's not speaking and they don't know what's happening. They just think their calling is to find these donkeys.

You know, eventually their journey led them to a country in verse five. And when they were come to the land of Suf, do you know who was there? Samuel the prophet. And when they get there, Saul says, you know what? My father's going to be worried about us.

It's no longer about the donkeys. He's going to be worried. He's thinking about his father.

And he says, you know what? I think we need to go back and just tell them we're okay. Don't worry about us. But the servant turns to him and says, you know what? I know that here in Suf, there is a prophet of God, a man of God, a man of honor.

I think we should go to him and ask him about the donkeys. Saul says, I didn't bring any money with me. But that servant says, I brought money.

Don't worry about it. Do you realize Saul listened to his servant? He could say, I'm away from daddy. You're my servant.

Let's go. And yet the servant says, I know a man of God and I've got money. You know, sometimes servants, people in a low position, no more than those in a position of authority.

That happens very often in the Bible. And so they are here and they begin to look for this man, Samuel. Saul has never even heard about him.

All his days, he's lived 20 miles from him, never seen him, never heard about him, didn't know about him. He's not a spiritual man. He's ignorant of these things.

But a servant knows a man of God. You see how God is using all of these things to guide him. He's little in his own sight.

He doesn't know about spiritual things. He doesn't know God's voice. He doesn't know God's plan.

He doesn't have a higher vision than finding donkeys. I mean, that's the height of his vision. He doesn't have a greater vision than that.

But you know what? He is a man who looks on himself as nothing. He's utterly unassuming. This is where King actually started.

You know, they actually go in pursuit of this prophet Samuel and they say, he can help us find donkeys. Not my will for my life, not spiritual blessing, not great ministry, not deliverance for the nation. I want to find my donkeys.

Do you see how your thinking could be different from God's? You're just looking basic nominal things, but your heart is right. God comes looking for you and says, you're my man. Would you choose people like that for jobs? On the basis of a heart, more than outward qualities that you see, God does.

He didn't care how gifted you are at writing. He does care about your attitude. That's how God is.

We are told that they just happened to come up the hill to the city where they know Samuel is. And as they come up, they meet these young maidens coming down about to draw water and they say, do you know Samuel the seer? And they said, yes, we do actually. In fact, we know everything.

We know where he is. Make haste. We know exactly what.

And they start pouring out all the details. They just happened to meet these ladies. Wouldn't that good? Then they go up to the city and as they reach the city, Samuel the prophet just happens to come out right at the same time as they're approaching.

Wasn't that amazing? Accidental of course, because they're looking for donkeys. This was all coincidence. And then Saul chooses this old man with the beard and mantle and says, excuse me, sir.

Do you know a prophet called Samuel? And he says, yes, I am Samuel. Says really? Yeah. We're looking for our donkeys.

Come with me and we'll have a little conversation. And so he takes them up and says, we're going to have a meal. Come with me.

I want you to come in and sit with me. I'm talking about the greatness of littleness. And so the meal is provided.

Do you know what Samuel does? He gives Saul the highest seat in the room and he gives them the biggest portion of the meal. He's a young guy looking for donkeys. You've got a great prophet, a national preacher.

And he's saying, you give that boy that seat. It's a very important boy. Do you see God's heart in these things? Be very careful what you despise, how you judge, how you even look at yourself.

There's people not being used by God at all, yet they're very proud of themselves. I mean, they're rebels against God and yet they have high views of themselves. There's other people who are seeing great things happen for God and they think nothing of it.

They're amazed that God would use them. I've met people, God is using them worldwide to do extraordinary things. They've seen extraordinary things.

And you know, as they look at themselves, I go, I don't understand why God would ever use me. I don't understand it. As soon as you lose that thinking, you've got a very serious problem.

And so Samuel takes him aside privately and says, you know what? God's chosen you to be the king of Israel. Immediately, listen to what he says in chapter 9, 21. And Saul answered and said, I'm not I a Benjamite of the smallest of the tribes of Israel, and my family is the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin.

Wherefore then speakest thou so to me? This is where God found his man and said, I'm going to anoint you king of Israel. You are the man. Could you discern that? Could you, watching this man day after day, would you say he's got all the qualities to be the greatest king in Israel, to deliver the nation from the Philistines? Could you have discerned that? Would you have seen in the actions? Well, let's see how he responds to his daddy and his servant and the asses.

And from this, I can ascertain something about the character of a man and how God is going to use him in the future. Is that how you judge things? We really don't. In looking for donkeys, he found a kingdom.

He found the anointing of God. He found the plan of God. He found the prophecies.

He found a ministry. He found a calling. Overnight, he's recognized by the entire nation.

Samuel anoints him and kisses him. Isn't that lovely affection? It's not just ministry anointing someone. He kisses him.

See at this stage, Saul is a man of God. Saul has a broken heart. Saul is usable.

Some people aren't usable. They could have great giftings, great ability, great knowledge, great eloquence, great context. They're telling God, now God, you need to do this and this and this and this.

God says, I'm not a bit interested. Do you see why this scripture so impacted me from a child? My mother said, while Saul was yet small in his own eyes, little in thine own eyes, I anointed you. This marked my entire life.

This has dominated my thinking, my speech, my choices, my everything. We're told that he was anointed privately. And when he left, his uncle asked him, what did the prophet want with you? Nothing.

Just a conversation about donkeys. He's now got the knowledge. I'm going to be the king of Israel.

What does he do with it? Nothing. Does he make it happen? No. Does he go tell his mates, guess what Samuel prophesied about me? Guess what Samuel done in my head? Guess who got anointed with the oil of the king today? I mean, I've got to tell you, you are my intimate friends.

I want to share with you. He didn't mention a word about it. Do you know what happened? Samuel goes to the nation and says, okay, you want the king now? God said, this is the time.

We're going to start drawing lots. I mean, an entire nation. And they go through tribe by tribe.

Which are the 12 tribes? Oh, it's this tribe. Okay. Let's go through the whole tribe.

Which family? It's this family. The family of Kish. Boy, it's getting narrower, isn't it? Who in Kish's family is to be the king? And they start drawing the lots.

Saul. Where is he? Oh, he's disappeared. I wonder why.

And they go looking for him going, you're going to be the king of the nation. You know what he's hiding? You know what the Bible says? He's hiding in this stuff. What was the stuff? I don't know.

I think he went in and he just piled all this stuff on top and went, I want to hide. Why could this happen to me? Why would it happen? Why would God choose me? You know what? While you were yet little in your own eyes, God anointed you. Saints, I'm telling you how to get God to come to this church and get God to come to your family, to your children.

I wonder if God took note of my mother saying that to me. Mothers, don't you underestimate the effect of laying in one scripture to your children. One scripture.

It dominated me. Little did my mom know, or maybe she did, I don't know, that God is looking there going, he's got to have this truth laid into him. It's got to be a part of him.

It's utterly vital. And so the entire nation, they now know this is the man, this is the one who's to be chosen king, the new. What does Saul do next? You know what he done? He went home.

Everyone discovers you're going to be the king of Israel. We've been looking for you. Look at your height and your strength and your stamina.

You wouldn't have said that a few days ago. I'm looking donkeys. I'm all sweaty.

I'm a failure. I can't even find, do you want my reputation report? And they're all in awe saying, you're the new king. What does he do? He goes home with a handful of men whose hearts God touched.

Just a small handful of men, a small band of men. And it was a work of God. He didn't build an army.

He didn't start trying to create anything. Do you know what it was? It was a work of the Holy Spirit of God. God creates this.

So he just goes home and carries on. He fits into his home. He settles back in his home.

He's probably out looking at the donkeys again. Hi mates. Here guys, you're not going to believe what's happening.

I can imagine him going to one of the donkeys, make sure the servant or his dad wasn't around. Guys, you've got to help me here. I'm in serious trouble.

The entire nation wants me to be the king. Boy, I feel safer here looking after you. Do you guys think you could get lost again and I'll go searching for you? I feel far more comfortable there than being called king of Israel.

I don't know how to do this. Do you know what happens next in chapter 11? The enemy invades the nation. War.

But they don't have an army. They can't defend themselves. You know what he does? He sends messengers to Gibeah.

He begins to stir the people. It says Saul came after the herd out of the field. Where was he? He's now recognized nationally as the king of Israel.

Where's he been? He's working in the field. Would you do that? God's just prophesied I'll be king. I'm going to be the greatest preacher in Ireland.

So what am I going to do? Well, I'm going to go back home and carry on with my knitting. I'm going to go back home and carry on washing cars. Do you know why? Because of the attitude, how I look at myself.

I am little in my own eyes. Whatever God's going to do, let him do. But I'm little in my own eyes.

If you're not little in your own eyes, you'd start creating something. And it's all through ministry. It's destroyed ministry worldwide.

And it says, listen, the spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard those tidings and his anger was kindled greatly. See, when he heard the enemy. Here's a man who had a heart.

He had a heart to go looking for donkeys. All of a sudden, when the spirit of God comes on him, he's got an entire different heart, a way of thinking, a way of saying, see any of you that get called to ministry, don't try to do it yourself or make yourself something you're not, or you think you ought to be. God speaks, you say, I want you to be that.

Don't make yourself that. Wait for the spirit of God. He will make you a shepherd.

He will make you a teacher. He will make you a prophet. You can't learn that.

It's the work of the spirit of God. So suddenly this man who only had the ability, and he didn't have much ability to look after donkeys and find them and search for them. All of a sudden, the spirit of God comes on him and he gets angry against the enemy.

Do you know how many soldiers he raised up? 330,000 were raised up. We don't have an army. But because the spirit of God's upon him, suddenly an army arises and they go out to fight the enemy and they defeat the enemy.

Well, what military school did you go to Saul? Well, what great general taught you how to fight battles? Well, where did you learn how to use the sword? I never used a sword. I don't know all of that. I shouldn't be here.

Only one thing going for me. I look at myself as undeserving of anything of God. And I know it's all in the spirit of God.

I don't know why God would use me. I don't know why God chose me. I don't know why God has blessed me.

Not at all. What a remarkable thing. And then they anointed him.

Do you know when he beat all the enemy said, we want to publicly anoint you in front of everyone? I'm sure he was anointed way back there by Samuel the prophet. Third and lastly, the curse of bigness. Do

you want a quick way to destroy God's call on your life? The anointing of God? To destroy you being usable in the hand of God? Do you want a quick way to cause God whose heart is set upon you to turn his back on you? Do you want a quick way to shut the mouth of God so God will never speak to you until your dying day? Become big in your own eyes.

If being little in your own eyes opens up the heavens, I assure you, when you fill your own vision, everything changes. Do you know someone who becomes big in their own eyes? I should be noticed. I should be used.

I do have giftings. I've got much to contribute to the kingdom of God. I just don't understand people who don't use me.

I don't recognize the great calling on me. Do you know what begins to happen? You fill your own vision. And when you and your giftings and your abilities and your desires and your thoughts fill your thoughts, do you know what happens? You lose vision of God.

God doesn't fill your vision anymore. You see, while you're little in your own eyes, while you're weak, while you're fearful, while you can't do that, while you're in trials and troubles, do you know where I spent most of last night? I wouldn't like to tell you. I'm a broken man.

Do you hear me? I'm an utterly broken man and you would not have liked to have heard my prayers last night because I know exactly where I am. But you know what? If God's ever going to come to this situation, I know what's going to bring him. I do know.

The curse of bigness. Saul experienced the curse of bigness. It says in chapter 13.

Notice the pattern here. His story begins in chapter 9. It goes all the way through to chapter 15 where God says, you used to be in the past little in your own eyes, but you've lost it somewhere. See from chapter 13 to chapter 15, those three chapters, we find out why God rejected him.

He's only king for two years. He's only little in his own eyes for two years. He's only usable for two years.

He's only humble for two years. He's only a man of God for two years. He only has the anointing of God for two years.

Two years. He's king for 40 long years. But yet, you know what the Bible shows us? That something came into his heart and that for 38 long years, he lived as a big man in his own eyes.

For two years as king, he was little in his own eyes and the blessing of God was there. But see after that, for 38 long years, King Saul, he filled his own vision. Look at the radical change in him.

He's no longer saying, I don't know why God would use me. I am the least of the least of the least. Something radically changes.

It says in chapter 13, one and two, he had reigned two years over Israel. Saul chose him. And notice this, I'm giving you a brief overview of chapter 13, 14 and 15.

What went wrong? How do you go from God choosing you and bypassing everyone in the nation and going, this man who's looking for donkeys, I'm choosing him. I'm going to anoint him. I'm going to work with him.

I'm going to speak to him. I'm sending the greatest prophet who ever walked the face of the earth to speak to him. How do you go from there to God speaking and saying, I've rejected you.

You're finished. The kingdom has taken off you. And you get left there for 38 years.

Same position, same ministry, same calling, fighting the enemies of God, accomplishing a lot, but you're rejected. Who wants ministry without God? Yet the church is filled with it. When you go to a church and they don't emphasize character, they emphasize anointing and gifting and ministry, but not character.

There's something wrong. It's a soul church, but certainly not the soul who is at the beginning. Look for a minute.

What changed? What happened to Saul? After two years as king in chapter 13, verse one and two, it says, Saul chose him 3,000 men of Israel. Remember before he let men whose hearts were touched by God come and follow him. Now he's not doing that.

He's suddenly made a very subtle change here. He is choosing 3,000 men of Israel. Then chapter 13, 15, and Saul numbered the people that were present with him.

About 600 men. I want to know who's with me. I want to know who's loyal to me.

I want to know who's behind me. It's no longer God's kingdom. He becomes the central focus of this.

What about chapter 14, verse 17? Listen to what he says. Number now and see who has gone from us. Chapter 14, verse 52.

And when Saul saw any strong man or any valiant man, he took him unto him. Chapter 15, verse four. And Saul gathered the people together and he numbered them.

Do you see what has suddenly happened? He has changed to him building something, building a ministry, building an organization, gathering people around him, choosing the very best of people. I bet he wasn't choosing for character. I bet he wasn't choosing the most humble.

I want gifted soldiers. I want strong men. I want men who can fight enemies.

That isn't how God chose you, was it? So now you're building something on principles that God never chose you for. You know why? You are filling your vision. And you know what you've lost sight of? Holiness, purity, the fear of God, humility where you're little in your own sight.

You are losing that. And you know what? If you ever lose a vision of God and ministry and church and yourself become the center of it, you're cursed. It's the curse of bigness.

And I'm not against bigness. I'm not against big churches. I'm not against reaching nations.

I know men of God who are reaching entire nations. They're men of God, but they walk humbly with the Lord. You see how Saul moved to destroy in this littleness.

He has become a ministry man. In chapter 13, we read about the Philistines coming up. The enemy gathered against him and the people were beginning to scatter from him.

I'm showing you the downfall of a great man. And you know what? He went and made the sacrifice. They were waiting for Samuel.

Samuel's a prophet of God. We're waiting on him to make the sacrifice. Then we'll fight the enemy.

You know what Saul started to look around and he goes, the people are beginning to scatter from me. I can't lose the people. I can't lose the numbers.

I can't lose the ministry. I've got to keep this together. So you know what I'll do? I'll move into another man's ministry and I will offer the sacrifice.

Happens all through the church. If you lose the ministry, let the ministry go down the drain, but make sure you keep God. It's absolutely vital.

And so listen, Samuel comes on and begins to say, Saul, what are you doing? He's watching this man from a nobody being anointed of God, becoming a somebody. And now do you know how dangerous it is for God to bless you? When I was a young preacher, an old preacher said, listen to me carefully, Keith. The reason God will not grant miracles of healing to many is that he can't trust them.

And if he'd done it, he could destroy them. Who is trustworthy? Could God use you and you not get proud? Could God save a thousand souls through you and you wouldn't become arrogant? Would you stay little in your own eyes or as God uses you to preach a sermon or to do something or reach a soul and you've gained more knowledge and you're growing in Christ. Now you think you're something so dangerous.

So, so dangerous. Do you realize how dangerous that is? That slowly, subtly you become bigger in your own vision. I'm a great man.

I'm a gifted man. I've accomplished things for God. I know how to speak now.

So dangerous. And so he forces himself to make the sacrifice and we read how Samuel comes up and begins to rebuke him. He says, for now the Lord would have established thy kingdom upon Israel forever, but now thy kingdom shall not continue.

The Lord has sought him, a man after his own heart. Two years and you've messed it up. You know what God is saying? I'm looking for a man after my own heart.

You used to have that heart. You've lost it. I don't care how much you're accomplished in the ministry.

I don't care what people think about you. Do you know how dangerous it is when God begins to bless and to use you or to gift you? Do you know how dangerous that is that you think something, you think you've done that and you think you've accomplished that and you think you ought to be noticed? It's deadly. And Saul begins to reach those lofty heights and Samuel can see accurately, I know who you were.

Sure I found you when you're looking for donkeys. You've forgotten who you are. Since getting saved, have you forgotten who you are? As you go along, do you just forget the reality? You used to fear God.

You're scared of sin. You're careful about words. You watched over the word of God.

You searched the word of God. You prayed before you've done anything. Now you don't need to do that.

You know how this works. I've told you guys so many times, I've preached 30 plus years. Do you know what? I don't know how to do this.

I don't have a clue how to preach. I don't know how this operates. All I know is I've got to stay broken at the feet of Jesus.

That's all that matters. Some people start listening too much to what people say about them. And you know it's important to encourage and it's important to say things, but you better be careful what you touch and accept of what people say about you.

For some of you, it'd be better God never touches you. And so I can go through this period of Saul's life. Remember in chapter 14, how Jonathan and his servant won that great victory.

And then it broke into a national war and Jonathan was a great victor in it. And remember in the heat of the battle, remember what Saul said. He said, I make a vow.

I place a curse that nobody between now and evening time is to eat anything. And if they do, they must die. We're going to fight without food.

Where's that in God's word? You're not listening to God. You're disobeying God. You're proud.

You're big in your own eyes. You think you can do all this. Now you're creating laws.

You are not obeying the clear things of God's word, but you're creating your own laws and saying, this is the word of the Lord. Men ought to die if they don't do what I say. What a tragedy.

Do you know what happened? Jonathan hadn't heard that. And he got to a forest and he was tired and faint and there was honey there. And he took some of that honey on the end of a stick and he took the honey and it says his eyes were enlightened and he didn't think, oh, everyone else is going to faint.

And he's there saying, don't you see I'm enlightened, I'm strengthened and this is good. Do you know what Saul's father was going to do when he found out? He's going to kill him and say, well, you're going to have to die for the law that I created. God is looking at Saul saying, you're not obeying basic things I say.

And yet here's Saul with his own son saying, I'm sorry, son, I love you, but you're going to have to die because you did not keep the vow, the curse. And you're going to have to die because listen, a little bit of honey. You took a little bit of honey.

God help you Saul, you should have stayed little in your sight. How you judge others, you'll be judged. I can see God now saying, I could have turned this, but you're a hopeless case.

You judge people in a way that you wouldn't want me to judge you. And then remember with Amalek, where we read at the beginning, and I'll close with this now. Remember that with the sheep and Samuel gave a command, destroy them all.

And then Samuel comes back among them and he says, did I not say destroy everything? And he said, yes, and I obeyed the word of God and I done everything and I listened to the Lord and I didn't. You stink in the nostrils of God. You're a professional ministry man.

You're anointed with the real Holy Spirit. You have the real power of God. You have all the numbers.

You're delivering the entire nation and yet your character and your attitude stinks to God. Do you know what? He was blind. Do you see him? When you're little in your own eyes, you notice things.

When you become big in your own eyes, you don't even see that you're not obeying God anymore. You're hard on others, but you cannot say that you don't even love God. He began to say, it was the people, not me.

It was them. I done everything. I obeyed God.

I done all of the things. No, he hadn't. He had lost it.

And he even said, it said the Lord, the word of the Lord came on to Samuel saying, it repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king for he has turned back from following me and has not performed my commandments and aggrieved Samuel. And he cried onto the Lord all night before delivering the message to Saul. The next day, he's going to speak to Saul again.

And he said, I've got a word from the Lord for you. Speak on man of God. Really? You want the word of the Lord.

You don't even know where you're at. You can hear sermons. And you know what he says? The kingdom's departed from you.

God has rejected you. You were once small in your own eyes. Now you're a big man and you've destroyed this.

Guess what Saul does next. He just goes out and carries on fighting the enemies of God. You know the story.

He becomes jealous, suspicious, fearful, angry, murderous. He tried to kill young David. Here's a young guy, a shepherd boy, not a trained soldier.

He's a shepherd. You're dangerous. You're dangerous.

That anointed plant, you're dangerous. I'm a man of war. You've forgotten where you've come from.

Vengeful, arrogant, a false accuser. You're imagining things in your own brain. 38 years of this.

The spirit of God leaves you and now a tormenting spirit from the Lord comes to you. Goes like this. See much of the church today.

One minute it's the spirit of God. One minute it's a deceiving spirit. They can't even tell the real from the false.

Saul, remember when the spirit of God came on him and he prophesied naked. What confusion. Where's the character yet the spirit of God comes and supernatural things happen.

He didn't say, I've sinned. Pardon me. Turn again to me.

Do you know what he said to Samuel? Now I don't want the people getting the wrong impression here. I know your messages. God's rejected you.

Departed from you. It's over. Now Samuel, listen to me.

Just this one last time. Let's go worship together in front of the people. Let's go up there together and you say the prayer and let's have a meeting and let's get the band going and the worship team.

Let it all be there and the lights and the numbers and let's just pretend. From that day, Samuel the prophet departed and never once again went to see King Saul. God never once spoke to him again.

He went to witches to speak to him. You know the witch of Endor and how did he die? An archer's arrow hit him. He asked the servant to kill him.

Then he committed suicide. That's the end of a man who once used to be little in his own sight and God came searching for him. He was a donkey searcher but with the right heart and God said, that's my man.

Then when he got everything of the kingdom of God and the anointing and ministry and a whole reputation and a whole history of serving God and God said, I reject you because of your heart. My message tonight, little in thine own sight. Don't tell me little things aren't important things and if you're little in your own sight, God will use you and bless you.

God is looking for a heart, not gifting, not ability, not numbers. He's looking for a heart. Will you obey me? Do you fear me? Will you serve me? Let's just stand here.

Let's pray together as we close. Father, we thank you. Lord Jesus, Lord Jesus, we know according to this book that you're looking for a man, a woman after your own heart.

You are searching the nations. The seven eyes of the Lord, the spirit of God searches the nation. Lord God, the nations of the entire world looking for a man, looking for a woman who he can show himself strong.

You're not looking for strong people. You're not looking for gifted people. You're not looking for eloquent people, but oh God, we know that you're searching for someone who is weak enough, small enough, unable enough, but has a heart that truly looks at themselves as nothing.

My God, we see in the Bible how you choose all of these people because of a condition of the heart and my God, protect us in this church. God, help us, oh God, that we had reigned these hearts, that we had cast ourselves at your feet, that we'd be small in our own eyes, that we wouldn't learn the things of the kingdom of God, that we wouldn't learn professionalism, but oh God, we'd be broken at your feet and Lord God, amazed that you would use us, amazed, oh God, that you'd speak in our midst, amazed, oh God, that you'd touch a city or a nation or our world for your glory and praise. And Father, we do pray for your grace tonight on every single life, even our friends here who have joined us in this meeting.

I pray, oh God, move in their hearts and their lives, oh God. Lord God, have a deal in with each one of us. Lord God, we want to keep your spirit here.

We want to keep your presence here. We want to keep the word of God here. In Jesus' mighty name, we love you, Lord God.

Blessed be your name. Hallelujah. Oh, hallelujah.

Worthy is the Lamb. Worthy is the Lamb. Worthy is the Lamb.

Blessed be your name, Lord Jesus. We magnify you. We exalt you, oh God.

Worthy is the Lamb of God. Just worship him for a minute as we close. He will look towards you if you've got a broken heart.

God isn't asking you to be strong in your situations, in your trials, your troubles. He's not looking that you have it all together and you have the strength or the power or the courage or the faith. He's looking for a broken, contrite heart that he can show himself strong, that he can reveal his power, that he can come and reveal his words.

He's not looking for your wisdom. He wants to reveal his wisdom to you. He's not looking for your knowledge.

He wants to reveal knowledge to you. He's not looking for your ability to do the will of God. As soon as you think that you can serve him and do it, you're finished.

It's in a condition of brokenness and weakness and contrition. That's where God is going to meet with you. That's how you keep the blessing of God.

That's how you keep the word of God, is by the place of brokenness. Hallelujah. Lord God, thank you that you used Jeremiah when he said unto you, I'm but a child.

How can you use me? I thank you that you used Moses as an old man when he said, oh, if only you'd come 40 years ago. But how can you use me now? My God, we see the pattern throughout scripture of how and why and when you laid your hand upon men and women. We love you tonight.

We bless you. We worship you. Lord God, take control of our lives.

In Jesus' mighty name. Amen.

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