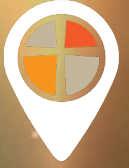


ANXIOUS (FOR NOTHING)



CUSTER ROAD
United Methodist Church

WEEK 6: THE MOST DREADED HOLIDAY OF THE YEAR 2/14/2021

SCRIPTURE

1 Samuel 16:7; John 4:18

BACKGROUND

In 1 Samuel, we see the Israelites transitioning from the era of Judges to the monarchy of David. After a stormy season under Saul's kingship, Samuel is in town to see Jesse's sons so that he can anoint the new king. It is interesting to see that Samuel and God have a bit of disagreement on who must be the king. Grieving from Saul's unfaithfulness, Samuel sees Saul 2.0 in Eliab; a tall statured man with a good looking face, just like Saul but younger. The authors of 1 and 2 Samuel are not shy about commenting on the physical appearance of Saul. Saul was described as "the most handsome man in Israel- head AND (emphasis added) shoulders taller than anyone else in the land" (1 Samuel 9:2 NLT). Eliab checks the box for Samuel's image of a king.

While it might be disappointing to us that even our most beloved prophet Samuel had to have the "right look" for his choice king, God does not disappoint us. God says "Do not consider his appearance or his height ... the Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." (2 Samuel 16:7) Through this passage, perhaps the authors of 1 and 2 Samuel were criticizing Saul's obsession over "how it looks," and his desire to be seen and noticed. What may be notable to even a great leader as Samuel is not always notable to God. What God notices does not always reflect what others notice- even when they are Samuel. Yet, many of us are desperate to have the "right look" so that we can be noticed by people like Samuel in our lives. So, how are we called to faithfully respond when we are feeling invisible and not noticed in our lives? How can we faithfully respond to our tendency of focusing on outward appearances?

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What are the outward appearances, the "right look" that are acceptable in our society, and that are encouraged for us to pursue in order to be noticed by others?

What are the outward appearance, the "right look" we wear everyday to be noticed by others? In which point does it become unhealthy, and perhaps toxic?

What do you do when you feel like you don't have the "right look," or feel invisible?

Why was it important for Samuel to look for the "right look"?

Why is it important for God to look for the "right heart"?

What is noteworthy to God can be different from what is noteworthy to others, even if those "others" are good figures like Samuel. Who are the Samuels in your life whom you might feel pressure to be noticed?

What does God say about how we can faithfully respond to feeling invisible in our lives? _____

"There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love."

1 John 4:18