Fully You – Part 1

# Unlocking Your New Identity in Christ

# (1 Samuel 16-17)

Welcome to Christ’s Community Church. Today we’re kicking off a brand-new message series entitled “Fully You”, reflecting on our new identity in Christ, shaking off the old habits, and embracing the process of unlearning the old patterns of living that keep us from walking as who Christ says we are. And so, today I want to speak to you about your calling, because God plants within each believer the seeds of a divine calling. I believe that if we could grab hold of the concept of our calling there would be no stopping us from embracing the crucified life that Christ has called us to live.

Now, traditionally, this season of Lent has been a time for Christians around the world to reflect on the sufferings of Christ and to unite themselves to him in their own suffering. However, in this series I’d like to explore how lasting change happens when you embrace Christ’s forgiveness, walking in freedom, serving and being fully you as you live a new life. That’s what the Bible tells us, the apostle Paul said,

“We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life” (Romans 6:4).

What we want to do in this series is to learn to live out who God says we really are in Christ. Being fully you, not just for a season, but for life. Not by giving up Facebook, not by stopping eating meat or any other thing, but through spiritual disciplines lived out every day. And so, this morning I want to speak to you very specifically about the call of God and one of the things that God has called each of us to do is to serve to the best of our ability.

If you could open your Bibles to the Old Testament book of first Samuel, we’re going to look at a familiar Bible story about a man named David. Now many of you remember him as the shepherd boy who killed the giant named Goliath. Others of you may think of him as a great King, but what few people think about is the time between David’s calling as a boy to his taking the throne. We don’t often think about the years of preparation, the process of working out his calling, before his great victory over Goliath, or taking the throne as king of Israel.

Now, to set the stage and give you a little bit of context, turn to chapter 16. If you don’t have a Bible or the app on your phone, we’re going to put the Scriptures on the screen. The Bible tells us that the current king of Israel was Saul, but his heart had turned away from the Lord, and so God had already chosen a replacement. In first Samuel, chapter 16, God said to the prophet Samuel in verse one,

"How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king" (1 Samuel 16:1).

You could say its election year in Israel and so the prophet Samuel goes to Bethlehem and comes to Jesse’s house. Knocking on the door he invites him and his sons to come worship with him. Now, at this point no one else knew that God had chosen David, but that’s the way elections worked in Israel, there weren’t red states or blue states, God is sovereign and so he simply voted them in, and he voted them out. Verse 6 says, Jesse brought his sons and when they arrived,

“Samuel saw Eliab and thought, "Surely the Lord's anointed stands here before the Lord." 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. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (1 Samuel 16:6-7).

And so, seven times Jesse brought one of his sons to stand in front of Samuel, but seven times the Lord said, “Not this one.” Finally, Samuel asked Jesse,

“Are these all the sons you have?” “There is still the youngest,” Jesse replied, “but he’s tending the sheep…” (1 Samuel 16:11).

Now, David was out in the field faithfully caring for his father’s sheep when the prophet of God came looking for him. Jesse had eight sons and God had chosen one, but no one knew or suspected that God would have chosen the youngest. However, Samuel said, "Send for him; we won’t sit down until he arrives." You see, Samuel knew this one had to be the one, because God had sent him, he’d rejected the seven others, and so David must be the chosen one of God. He was chosen for greatness and in the same way number one, you also were chosen by God.

## 1. You Were Chosen for Greatness

What’s really interesting, is that many of you are in the same place as David. God had chosen you before the creation of the world, he’s called you, he’s had his eye on you, but you’ve been overlooked by most of the people in your life. And yet, the Bible tells us in Ephesians chapter 1,

“In (Christ) we were also chosen…” (Ephesians 1:11).

In other words, it was predestined, it was preordained, and this call, God’s call in Christ is “irrevocable” (Romans 11:29). In fact, up to this very moment he’s been shaping you and forming you, he’s using your experiences and relationships, even using those dysfunctional relationships to work out everything in conformity with his purpose, bringing you to that place where he could use your life for his glory. And that’s why the apostle Paul was so passionate about this, passionate for the church, praying that our eyes would be opened, that our hearts would be enlightened, so that we may know “the hope to which he’s called us, the riches of his glorious inheritance” in those who believe (Ephesians 1:18).

Now I assure you that David didn’t even see this coming, I mean, he wasn’t even invited to worship the day that Samuel came, they didn’t call him in from the field, but God had his eye on him. And so, verse 12 says that, Jesse sent and had David brought in,

“Then the Lord said, "Rise and anoint him; he is the one." So, Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him” (1 Samuel 16:11-13).

He anointed David in front of his family, he was singled out in the presence of his brothers, signifying that he’d be the next king of the nation of Israel. And yet, I want you to notice what David does next. The Bible says in first Samuel, chapter 17,

“Jesse's three oldest sons had followed Saul to the war: The firstborn was Eliab; the second, Abinadab; and the third, Shammah. David was the youngest. The three oldest followed Saul, but David…” Does he practice doing king things? Does he get fitted for his new robe or his crown? No, the Bible says, “but David went back and forth from Saul to tend his father's sheep at Bethlehem” (1 Samuel 17:13-15).

And so, David’s brothers had gone back to the front lines, they followed Saul to war, they went to back where the action was, but David did what? He went back and forth between tending sheep for his father and serving king Saul.

Now, I wonder how many of you feel that way? You know, maybe in your job, or raising your children, or whatever your responsibilities are, but you feel like everybody else is on the front line where the action is. And you’re just going back and forth, doing what seems to be so insignificant, just going back and forth to a job that you hate, back and forth changing diapers, back and forth doing whatever. And yet the reality is, for those of you who feel insignificant, like what you’re doing doesn’t matter, or the calling or activity that God has assigned you is meaningless, let me assure you that nothing is insignificant when it’s done for the cause of Christ. That’s why the Bible says in Colossians chapter 3,

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord” (Colossians 3:23).

And so, my encouragement to you today is to recognize that God has placed a calling on your life. From the beginning of time he’s been shaping you, forming you, he’s anointed you with his Spirit because he’s chosen you. Today if you’re in that time between when God has called you, he’s given you his great promises, he’s shown you a vision of your life, and yet you feel like you’re just going back and forth. You know, you feel like there’s something greater, but you’re still tending sheep. And so, I want you to take courage because right now the most significant opportunities of your life lay in your ability to serve in small ways with a passion for his Kingdom. For those of you who know you were chosen, and yet right now it feels like you’re just going back and forth doing menial things, maybe you’re stuck in a job that you hate, I want to encourage you, number two, to remain faithful in the little things.

## 2. Faithful in the Little Things

Remain faithful to that dream that God has planted in you, maybe that ministry that hasn’t been born yet, or that homeschooler that’s driving you crazy. Remain faithful in the little things, because it’s part of the process, God’s working, he’s put you in that place, he’s given you that child, and he’s going to use you to make a difference. And so, I just want to encourage you to remain faithful, because one day you’ll hear these words, Jesus said,

"Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things” (Matthew 25:21).

And just like David, if you’re faithful in the little things, God will make you faithful over many things. And so, here’s David, the anointed King of Israel, going back and forth tending sheep, when one day his big opportunity came. His brothers were out on the front lines, for 40 days this giant Philistine came forward every morning and evening making these defiant boasts, but one day… verse 17 says,

“Jesse said to his son David, "Take this ephah of roasted grain and these ten loaves of bread for your brothers and hurry to their camp. Take along these ten cheeses to the commander of their unit. See how your brothers are and bring back some assurance from them…" (1 Samuel 17:17-19).

Verse 20, "Early in the morning David left the flock with a shepherd, loaded up and set out as Jesse had directed. He reached the camp as the army was going out to its battle positions, shouting the war cry. Israel and the Philistines were drawing up their lines facing each other. David left his things with the keeper of supplies, ran to the battle lines and greeted his brothers. As he was talking with them, Goliath, the Philistine champion from Gath, stepped out from his lines and shouted his usual defiance, and David heard it" (1 Samuel 17:20-23).

Now, I want you to notice that the only reason why David heard the defiant cries of Goliath, the only reason he was in a position to do something great for God, was because he was faithfully following the directions of his father to bring cheese and bread to his brothers. Like a pizza delivery boy, he was faithful, running cheese and bread to the front lines, doing that small thing that God had given him to do. And I wonder today what Christ’s Community Church would look like if every one of you who calls this church home started running to the battle lines to do that little thing that God has given you to do?

You see, it’s that little thing, that you may feel is an insignificant thing, that has the most significance when it’s done with faithfulness and devotion to God. And here’s what I hope you’ll understand, if you’re serving, parking cars, working security, or greeting people, you’re making them feel glad they decided to come to church today. By being faithful in that little thing, by the time they get inside to worship and hear the Word of God, they’ve already been touched by several people who were doing what seemed to be insignificant but had a Kingdom purpose. And so, by the time I preach the message and invite someone to receive Jesus, by the time we’re praying for God to heal the sick, the battle’s already been won because you’ve been reaching and connecting them to the love of Jesus.

There are some of you that need to grasp the power of this, because you may think it’s insignificant to hand out bulletins, to welcome people and to serve. You may think it’s insignificant for you to give a few hours of your week serving behind-the-scenes, but if God could use a young boy’s faithfulness to take cheese and bread to his brothers on the battle lines couldn’t God use you too? Couldn’t God use your faithfulness in the children’s ministry to lay a foundation of hope in a child’s life? Couldn’t God use you in preparing, setting up and cleaning the dining room as we’re building relationships with others? As you’re loving people, serving them, and dedicating your time to them, couldn’t God use that in a powerful way?

You see, you’re called to serve and to be faithful in the little things. Jesus said it this way, he promised,

“The greatest among you will be your servant… and whoever humbles himself will be exalted” (Matthew 23:12).

God has a great plan for your life, you were chosen for greatness, but it doesn’t start one day when you get your big break. It starts the moment you begin doing what God has given you to do.

Jesus said, “My Father will honor the one who serves me” because we’re serving in the strength that God provides so that in all things God may be praised (John 12:26). And so, then number three, just imagine what God could do through your simple act of obedience like David’s?

## 3. A Simple Act of Obedience

I want to encourage those of you who are serving in little ways because sometimes it feels like it just doesn’t matter. And honestly, I understand because I’ve seen it firsthand for over 20 years. For those of you who are moms you may have cleaned the house in the morning, but a few hours later you’d never know it, it feels hopeless, and it seems like you’re not getting anything done all day. I know sometimes it seems like your tending sheep, it feels so insignificant, it feels like you’re just running bread and cheese to the battle lines.

And that’s where David was, but he was faithful, and through his obedience he was shaping his destiny. It makes me wonder if that’s who Jesus was thinking about when he said, “The greatest among you should be like the youngest…” (Luke 22:26). I wonder if he was thinking about David when he said, “The one who rules like the one who serves” (Luke 22:26).

You see, David knew that he’d been chosen, he was faithful to that calling, and he was obedient, being willing to shift his priorities around to meet the need of the hour. He’d been sent to the battle lines to deliver food, but no sooner did he arrive then he realized that there was a greater opportunity to serve. As he was greeting his brothers, he saw soldiers running away from the battle lines in fear, he heard Goliath mocking not only the army of Israel, but the God of Israel as well. And so, David hearing the defiant taunting of the enemy, recognizing that he’d been chosen, remaining faithful to his calling, with a simple act of obedience he volunteered. He said to Saul in verse 32,

"Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him." (1 Samuel 17:32).

You see, David had already seen the reaction of the Israelite soldiers. And so, he stepped up in obedience knowing that if it was going to get done, he’d have to do it himself. In the same way, you can make a difference in this church, and in this community, by taking hold of that opportunity to serve that God has put in front of you.

David said, “Your servant will go.”

What if everyone at Christ’s Community Church were to grab hold of this? What if you recognized that you’re not just a greeter, you’re not just a children’s worker, but you’re a staff member in the kingdom of God. You know, your boss might happen to pay your salary, but you’re on staff full-time in the kingdom of God. You see, there is no part-time ministry, just like there’s no part-time forgiveness of sins, and we don’t have a part-time Savior. And so, whatever you’re doing for the kingdom of God matters, whether you’re working with sound, in the music ministry, parking cars, greeting people, discipling others or working in children’s ministry your service matters.

David was in a position to be thrust into the national spotlight simply because he served God to the fullest of his ability. Positionally he was in the right place, he was qualified by his work experience, and when his big opportunity came, just before he went out to fight Goliath, he told Saul,

"Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine" (1 Samuel 17:36-37).

Who would’ve ever thought that the task of tending sheep would have equipped David for this moment? But God had used every day of David’s life to prepare him for this challenge. And the whole time you thought you were just vacuuming the sanctuary, helping with the finances, mopping the floors, setting up the dining room, and putting up with the kids, God was preparing you to fight Goliath. You see, you were investing in others so that they would grow up to serve God with passion. You may have thought you were just handing out bulletins, but God was using you to connect to God and community.

No matter how insignificant it seems, I want to encourage you to get involved, to keep running cheese and bread to the battle lines. Keep tending sheep, because God is preparing you for what he’s already prepared for you. I want to encourage you to be Fully You, because you’ve been chosen for greatness, and so be faithful and obedient because there’s no limit to what God can do through your life when you serve him to the fullest ability of your calling. Even now he’s getting you ready for what lies ahead. God is preparing you today for the battles you’ll face tomorrow.

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