

1 Samuel 16:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither.

Analysis

And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither.

David's absence from the ceremony reveals his marginal status within his own family - assigned to menial labor while his brothers participated in sacred rituals. The Hebrew *qatan* (youngest/smallest) emphasizes both age and social standing. Samuel's insistence 'we will not sit down till he come hither' introduced urgency and elevated the overlooked son to center stage. God's pattern of choosing the least likely candidate - Abel over Cain, Isaac over Ishmael, Jacob over Esau - reaches its clearest expression.

Historical Context

Shepherding, while essential, was considered lowly work often assigned to youngest sons or hired servants. The sheep's isolation in wilderness areas meant extended absence from family and community life. David's separation from the sacrificial gathering may reflect his status as an afterthought in family affairs.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. Who in your community might be overlooked for significant service despite genuine faithfulness?
2. How does David's initial exclusion encourage those who feel marginalized or undervalued?

Interlinear Text

וַיֹּאמֶר	שְׁמוּאֵל ל	אֶל	יֵשׁוּ	הֵת מו	הַנְּעָרִים	וַיֹּאמֶר
And he said	And Samuel	H413	unto Jesse	Are here all	thy children	And he said
H559	H8050		H3448	H8552	H5288	H559

ע וְ	שָׂא ר	הַקָּטָן	וְהִנֵּה ה	רָע ה
H5750	There remaineth	yet the youngest	H2009	and behold he keepeth
	H7604	H6996		H7462

בְּצֹאן	וַיֹּאמֶר	שְׁמוּאֵל ל	אֶל	יֵשׁוּ	שְׁלָח ה	וְקַח נו	כִּי
the sheep	And he said	And Samuel	H413	unto Jesse	Send	and fetch	H3588
H6629	H559	H8050		H3448	H7971	H3947	

לֹא	נֹסֵב	עַד	בֹּא ו	כֹּה:
H3808	him for we will not sit down	H5704	till he come	hither
	H5437		H935	H6311

Additional Cross-References

2 Samuel 7:8 (Parallel theme): Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel:

1 Chronicles 17:7 (Parallel theme): Now therefore thus shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I took thee from the sheepecote, even from following the sheep, that thou shouldest be ruler over my people Israel:

1 Samuel 17:28 (Parallel theme): And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle.

2 Samuel 13:3 (Parallel theme): But Amnon had a friend, whose name was Jonadab, the son of Shimeah David's brother: and Jonadab was a very subtil man.

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