

“DAVID: I – UNLIKELY HERO”
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I Samuel 16:1-13

John 6:5-13

Have you ever felt small? I don't mean small physically, but small like being unimportant, ignored, unappreciated. Everybody that we've heard about today probably did – David, the little boy in the crowd, and yes, even Superdog!

Superdog was a dachshund and was so small physically that no one took him seriously, and they even made fun of him. That little boy in the crowd was small as well – physically yes, but imagine him and all the other children in that vast crowd that day pushing in to see Jesus – it's not hard to imagine that they were being pushed out of the way by adults who were big and strong wanting to get closer to the Savior. It's not hard to imagine that those children had to strain to even get a glimpse of Jesus for the adults in the way!

And then, there was David – not small because of size actually, but small in terms of being ignored because he was the youngest of seven sons. And, if you remember, back in those days, the only one that really, really mattered was the eldest son. Being as he was the seventh son – well, you can see why David felt small.

And he had a right to, because did you hear what happened in the story? Well, let me take you back and revisit it, with a little bit of background.

Back in the beginning, God ruled over his people and it was good. Then God's people started clamoring for an earthly king. So along comes King Saul, and that didn't turn out so well. He was not a good king, so God directed Samuel the prophet to go and select another to be the next king – even while Saul was still on the throne.

And so Samuel goes out to find the next king, and God sends him in the direction of a man named Jesse, who has been blessed with seven sons. Jesse hears that Samuel is coming and gets his sons ready. When Samuel shows up, Jesse brings out his pride and joy – his firstborn son named Eliab. He can just see it coming – Eliab will be the next king!

To his shock and dismay, Samuel says, “No, he's not the one. Let me see your next son.”

So Jesse brings in son number two – Abinadab – and lo and behold, the same thing happens again.

And again, with his third son – Shammah – and then again, with sons number four, five and six. By then, Jesse surely was crestfallen – he would not be the father of the future king.

Before he can turn away, Samuel asks him one more question – “Are these all of your sons?” Well no, these are not all of his sons, but David, as one person put it, “was off of Jesse’s radar screen that day.” He had pretty much ignored him, sending him out to tend the sheep in the field, because he was – well – small. Jesse never even considered the possibility that God might use him.

But, when Samuel questioned him and he mentioned that indeed he had one more son, old Jesse brought David in to meet Samuel – and you know the rest of the story – he was the one – and went on to become one of Israel’s greatest kings ever.

And don’t you love what Samuel said? “The Lord does not look on the outward appearance – the Lord looks on the heart.”

I think he looked on the heart of that little boy in the crowd that day with Jesus as well, don’t you? Here he was, a little child in the midst of thousands upon thousands of adults, but it was he, who was spotted at just the right time, holding in his hands just what Jesus needed – his little sack lunch of fish and bread.

And when he was called forward, Jesus took that gift and made a miracle happen. Don’t you know that, from that day forward, that little boy must have looked back on that day and been so proud of what he and Jesus had done!

Oh friends, today’s stories are filled with good news for people who feel small. Which is good, because feeling small is not. Feeling like nobody sees you, or nobody really cares about you, or that you’re unappreciated is tough, it’s lonely and depressing. Everyone wants to feel like they matter, like they’re needed, don’t they?

Well, the good news of the scripture today, is everyone does matter, and everyone is needed – big and small, old and young, strong and weak – everyone does matter. God doesn’t love us more because we’re the firstborn instead of the last born, or because we’re big and strong instead of smaller and less robust, or because we’re an extrovert instead of an introvert. As the scripture said, “God doesn’t look on the outward appearance, God looks on the heart.”

To God, and in God, everyone has value, everyone matters, and most of all, everyone can be an instrument of God’s work in this world – everyone – which means, all of us, as well.

So if you’re feeling small today, please know that, in God’s eyes, nothing could be further from the truth. God loves you and God values you, even if you feel like no one else does. And there will be things he calls you to do and be that no one else can possibly do or be – just you.

In the meantime, take heart – for remember that Jesus, God’s only begotten Son, was treated as small too. For the powers that be, in his day, were always

putting him down for the radical love he showed and taught. And they, who wielded power through might, called him small, for showing power through love. They tried to make him feel small through their shouting, while he stood silent in the face of their onslaughts. They encouraged might through the sword, and laughed at him, and called him small, when he said, “Turn the other cheek.”

And in their ultimate, what they thought would be their final, triumphant act with this small “supposed” Messiah, they hung him on a cross to die a horrible death by crucifixion.

But this “small” man wasn’t small at all – and rose from death to give us life – abundant life, real life, true life, eternal life – which today, we will celebrate as we receive Holy Communion.

Do me a favor. Sometime flip through the scriptures, and read the stories of all the supposed “small” people in the Bible, and you’ll be amazed at God’s love for them, and for the powerful things they do for his kingdom.

Like many really old people, who had surely been written off by society in their day as being no longer important – people like Abraham, Sarah, Moses, and Elizabeth – look at the incredible things God gave them to do.

Or people who were considered “small” and unimportant because of disease or some struggle in their life – that God used in a mighty way – people like the lame man he caused to walk, or the blind who could now see, or Mary Magdalene after he freed her from the demons with which she had struggled.

Or how about the widow in the temple, who surely saw herself as small, because that’s what the world called her – small because she was alone, small because she was vulnerable – small – and yet, she taught a lesson in giving when she gave all that she had to the offering one day – that her story lives on to this day as an example of a heart giving all to God.

Well, you get the idea – the Bible is filled with “small” people – the people the world calls “small” – but it’s filled with stories of God’s love for them, and God’s using them for the work of his kingdom.

So take heart today, my friends, no one is small in God’s eyes – no one. So don’t let anyone ever do that to you – make you feel small. For you are a child of God, and God looks upon your heart with love.

So like dear old Superdog, and David, and that little boy with his lunch, go forth from this place today with your head held high, and ask God to use you in the work of his kingdom, however he will. May it be so.

Amen.