**A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS**

Let’s play a word game, ok?  I say a word and you tell me your response with another word.

Salt? \_\_\_\_\_

Day? \_\_\_\_\_

Off? \_\_\_\_\_\_

Left? \_\_\_\_\_\_

Pizza? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Well, that last one might have been a teaser, unless you all are like me and would obviously say “Hawaiian” (you know, pineapple and Canadian bacon… mmmmmm).

But now let’s play a Bible word game.

Adam & \_\_\_\_\_?

Cain & \_\_\_\_\_\_?

Ahab & \_\_\_\_\_?

Aquila & \_\_\_\_\_?

Ananias & \_\_\_\_\_?

Paul & \_\_\_\_\_?

David & \_\_\_\_\_\_?

The last two could easily have been multiple choice and answered with D) All above.

Paul & Barnabas, Silas, Timothy.

David & Jonathan, Bathsheba, Goliath.

I’m not sure why it is, but I have been thinking a lot (I mean a whole lot) about David during this whole pandemic thing.  I’ve been reading and writing on his life and literature over the past month.  He fascinates me.  God meant for that to be so, seeing as how David became the standard for all future kings, and a “type” of the coming Messiah (2 Samuel 7:12-13).

Yesterday in my sermon on Psalm 27 (“*Whom Shall I Fear*?”) I mentioned I had read many Psalms trying to grasp where David got his great courage to face so many impossible dangers.  He seems larger than life, a real super-hero.  I mean how can one man conquer so many enemies like Goliath, the Philistines, Saul, assassination attempts, coup attempts, betrayals, and so many other life-threatening scenarios and still maintain his sanity?

But when we think of David we automatically think of not just a warrior but a king, shepherd, musician, friend, and author known as “*the sweet psalmist of Israel*” (2 Sam. 23:1).  David was truly “***A Man For All Seasons***.”

If you don’t know what that phrase means, let me explain.  Henry the VIII, the infamous king of England, became enraged at the Pope for denying him the right to divorce his wife, Catherine of Aragon.  She had the audacity to not give birth to a son that did not die!  In point of fact, she gave birth to three sons and two daughters.  But all three boys died in either stillbirth or infancy.  The mad king decided to get rid of her to marry Anne Boleyn, a sister of a former mistress.  He proceeded to decapitate Anne, marry Jane Seymour (who died shortly after the wedding), marry Anne of Cleves (who he divorced), marry Catherine Howard (who he also beheaded), finally marry Catherine Parr (who had the fortune to outlive him before she got the axe).

Through all this madness (think of Herod during the ministry of John the Baptist for a good parallel), a man named Sir Thomas More, the Chancellor of England, came along and, like John, told the king he had no right to divorce and remarry.  In an eerie similarity, Henry (like Herod) beheaded Thomas More for not permitting the divorce and blessing the new marriage.  Thomas More (like John) was a man who lived by his conscience and stood his ground, knowing the consequences for such convictions against a mad king.

Robert Wittington, a friend of Thomas More, wrote of him after his execution.  He said,

 "Thomas More is a man of an angel's wit and singular learning. I know not his fellow (i.e. his equal - rl). For where is the man of that gentleness, lowliness and affability? And, as time requireth, a man of marvelous mirth and pastimes, and sometime of as sad gravity. **A man for all seasons**."

Such also was the man David.  While he certainly has his faults, like all mortals do, he was labeled by God Himself as “*A man after My own heart*” (Acts 13:22).  In other words, to paraphrase, “*a man for all seasons*.” This term signified someone who lived according to a moral code and would not violate his conscience for convenience sake.  If it was “right” then he would do it, no matter what.

As a young man, the least and last of Jesse’s eight sons, his own father did not even consider him worthy to be seen by Samuel to become Israel’s next king (I Samuel 16:11 *- “And Samuel said to Jesse, “Are all the young men here?” Then he said, “There remains yet the youngest, and there he is, keeping the sheep*”).  In other words, don’t bother.

Yet God would reject the more kingly looking sons who had impressed Samuel and tell this judge, *“Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance,* ***but the LORD looks at the heart****.”*  And what God saw in the heart of David was pure gold.  He saw in this young shepherd one who would allow God to be the true King of Israel, serving only as His subordinate to carry out the Lord’s plans for His people.  He became the Gold Standard (or is that God-Standard?) for all future kings.

**Application**

God is at this very moment looking to see what you are made of.  He saw in David’s heart one like His own heart.  He saw in David one who would later write such words as*“14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer.”* (Psalm 19:1).  In other words, my words match the thoughts in my heart.  I live by my conscience.

The question remains, am I a man for all seasons?  Can I say to God, like David, “*Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me*” (Psa. 51:10)?  We know that the omniscient God *“is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.”* (Hebrews 4:12-13).

As God looked into David’s heart and saw a man who would live, and die, by his convictions, what does He now see as He looks into my heart?  With that said, let’s finish with our word game.  David & \_\_\_\_.  Answer: God.

Two more:  Rick & \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.   (Your name) & \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Until tomorrow… I love you.

Rick