

If you've spent much time in church or any time at all reading the Bible, you know that the text of Scripture is filled with remarkable characters, fascinating individuals who are catalysts for these amazing moments in God's unfolding plan for history and humanity. People like Noah (ark/flood) and Abraham (Isaac) and Joseph (slavery/authority) and Moses (out of Egypt) and Joshua (into Promised Land) and Rahab (former prostitute/ally) and Deborah (prophetess/leader) and Gideon (coward/hero – Midian) and Samson (appetites/victory – Philistines) and Ruth (faithful D-I-L) and Esther (queen/pleads) and Daniel (faithful prayer) and Jonah (rebellious prophet) and Peter (denial/leader). And that's barely scratching the surface. That's just the names you probably recognize and whose lives you're familiar with. Really incredible people and stories.

But of all the people in the Bible, maybe none is more compelling, more intriguing, more complicated, more perplexing **than David**. On the one hand, he's described as a man after God's own heart, singled out by God to play a critical role in the history of Israel and God's plan for the world. On the other hand, he's a man who commits the worst of betrayals, sexually assaulting the wife of one of his most loyal companions and then having that man killed to cover up his crime. All this contradiction and complexity wrapped up in one man. And yet, of all the things he did and all that he was, his ultimate role in God's redemptive plan was to prepare the way for and point God's people to the coming of the Messiah, Jesus. And this morning I want us to see how he does that in four distinct roles. Now like last week, I'm going to be bouncing all over the Bible this

morning, but our anchor point is going to be mainly in the OT book of 1 Samuel, in chapters 16-18. So if you'd like to take your Bible and go ahead and turn there with me.

Our introduction to David is found in 1 Samuel 16. At this point, Saul is the king over God's people, Israel, but he has just rejected the command of God, defiantly substituting his own will and wisdom for God's word, and so God has rejected Saul as king. In the aftermath of Saul's rebellion, God sends the priest Samuel to go to the town of Bethlehem where God will provide the next king of Israel from among the sons of a man named Jesse. God says that He will show Samuel which of the sons to anoint. So Samuel arrives in Bethlehem, and here's what happens [READ 1 SAMUEL 16:6-13]. Jesse uses a word in v.11 to describe his son David. Just about every English

translation translates the word as “youngest.” It can also be “smallest.” The Message paraphrase uses the word “runt.” But the word can also carry the **connotation of “least.”** It’s one who is regarded as insignificant. David was so overlooked that he wasn’t even invited to the family gathering with Israel’s priest. He was not even worth considering. Why? He wasn’t the oldest. He wasn’t the biggest. He wasn’t the strongest. He wasn’t the most impressive physically. He was easy to dismiss because he didn’t meet human presumptions. And yet, we learn the lesson here – God Himself says it – that man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart. David was the youngest, the smallest, the least by human estimation, but the Lord had chosen him and set him apart.

Well what does the Bible tell us about Jesus? When we are first introduced to Him, how has He come to us? How has He come to earth, to humanity? As a baby. As an infant. The youngest, the smallest, the least of human beings. And even among babies, he's insignificant by human standards. He isn't born to a royal or noble family. His parents aren't important; Joseph is in construction and Mary is a teenage unwed mother. He's not born in Jerusalem, the capital city; He's born in Bethlehem, a town described by the prophets as "too little to be among the clans of Judah." He's not born in a hospital or a palace; He's born in a crowded house. He isn't laid in a cradle, but in a feeding trough for animals. He isn't raised in a big, important city; He's raised in Nazareth, an obscure, backwater village with a bad reputation. But it wasn't just how He came or where He came. Isaiah 53:2-3 says,

“...he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.”

Unattractive, undesirable, despised, small, insignificant, the least. Philippians 2:5-8 echoes that assessment:

“Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” Jesus leaves the glory of heaven, letting go of all the privileges of equality with God, He empties Himself, He comes to earth, He

comes as a man, He comes as a servant, He humbles Himself to death. In David we see the smallest, the most easily overlooked, the least, chosen by God and set apart for His purposes. In Jesus we see the very same, but to an even greater degree. Jesus is the true and better David.

In 1 Samuel 16, we also see David's second role, **the shepherd**. The reason David isn't at the gathering with Samuel is that he's out keeping the sheep. In chapter 17 we're show repeatedly that David's primary role is that of shepherd [READ 1 SAMUEL 17:15, 20,28,34-35]. And what does a shepherd do? He cares for those who have no natural defense against their enemies. They don't have sharp teeth. They don't have claws. They don't have armor. They're not the fastest animals. They need

someone to protect them. They need someone to feed them. They need someone to keep them together, to make sure they don't get lost. Sheep need a shepherd, and David was a good shepherd. He cared for his flock, feeding them, defending them, making provision for their care. And all that with no recognition or appreciation from the flock. It's a thankless job that requires selfless dedication. David was a good shepherd.

And what do we know about Jesus? In Matthew 2:6 we read a prophecy that from Bethlehem will come a ruler who will shepherd God's people Israel. In John 10:11, 14-15 Jesus describes Himself as the good shepherd, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep...I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I



know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.” In Mark 14:27 Jesus references His approaching death by quoting an OT prophecy, “I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.” He is the shepherd who will be struck. The author of the NT book of Hebrews ends his letter with a reference to “our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep.” In 1 Peter 2:25 Peter calls Jesus “the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls,” and in 5:4, “the Chief Shepherd” under whose authority elders are commanded to shepherd the flock of God that is among them. Jesus is the Good Shepherd. He cares for weak, frail, broken sinners who are unable to defend themselves from our enemies. We are unable, in and of ourselves, to resist Satan. We are unable to overcome death. We are unable to avoid judgment. And yet Jesus, our good shepherd, protects us. He feeds us spiritually, symbolically

on His body and His blood, the bread of life and the blood of the new covenant. We find our nourishment and our sustenance in His provision. Jesus keeps His flock together, making sure none that the Father has entrusted to Him are ever lost. And if one should wander off, He is the shepherd who leaves the ninety-nine to go after the one and bring it home. But His single defining act as our Good Shepherd was the laying down of His life for the sake of His sheep. He died our death, taking our just penalty for our sin in our place, so that we might live, if we will trust and hope in Him alone. While David was a good shepherd who put his life at risk for the sake of his flock, Jesus is the true and better David who actually gave His life for His sheep.

We also see the picture of David **as a warrior**, a conquering hero. Maybe the most well-known and well-loved story about David is his battle against the Philistine giant Goliath. It's there in 1 Samuel 17. The Philistines have assembled their armies for battle against the Israelites at the Valley of Elah, and every day they send their champion – Goliath, a giant who could have been over 9 feet tall, whose spear head weighed 15 pounds and whose coat of armor weighed 125 pounds, just a massive human being – out to challenge and defy the armies of God's people. He calls for Israel to send out their champion and fight him one-on-one, to the death. And of course the Israelites are terrified. No one steps forward. Not even King Saul. This goes on for forty days. So David, whose brothers are all in the army, has brought them food from home, and he overhears what's going on. And this is

his response [READ 1 SAMUEL 17:32-51]. David is a bold and eager and fearless warrior who not only takes on the enemy, not only runs to the battle, but strikes down the enemy and cuts off his head. He is victorious. And he gets a reputation. When he comes back into the city, the people are singing, "Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his ten thousands." And David lives up to that reputation. As a military leader he defeats the armies of the Philistines, the Moabites, the Arameans, the Ammonites, the Edomites, all the enemies of God and God's people. He is a conquering hero who overcomes the enemies of the Lord.

And what are we told of Jesus? Well, He's not the traditional warrior. He doesn't come to Bethlehem as a military leader. That's what a lot of people were expecting

the Messiah to be, but He defies expectations. He's not a general or a soldier. But in His earthly ministry, Jesus does engage in battle, in spiritual warfare. He takes on the enemy of sickness by healing the blind, the lame, the disabled. He overcomes demonic forces by casting evil spirits out of afflicted people, delivering them. He takes on the enemy of death and defeats it, raising people from the dead: the son of the widow of Nain, Jairus' daughter, Lazarus. But His greatest triumph was over sin and its wages. By dying on the cross in the place of sinners as a perfect sacrifice, Jesus takes away the sin of all those who would believe in Him. And by rising from the dead on the third day, Jesus conquers death and the grave. In 1 Timothy 1:10 the Apostle Paul speaks of God's saving grace, "which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death

and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel...” Jesus appeared as a manifestation of God’s grace to abolish death and bring life and immortality. He conquers death and inaugurates life through the gospel, the good news of His life, death, and resurrection.

Hebrews 2:14-15 says it a little differently, “Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.” Not only did Jesus destroy death, but by destroying death He conquers the one who has the power of death, the devil, to deliver us from the enslaving fear of death. He fulfills the promise of Genesis 3 that the seed of the woman will crush the head of the serpent. Jesus has won the victory for you. He has

defeated death and the devil so that you no longer have to fear either. Their doom is certain. They still exist for now, but they are defeated enemies who will one day be utterly destroyed. David defeated human enemies with sling and stone, sword and spear. Jesus is the true and better David who defeats every spiritual enemy once and for all through His life, death, and resurrection.

David, the least among his brothers, is a shepherd who becomes a warrior. But the fourth and final role he plays is even better. He is the warrior who **becomes the king**. In 2 Samuel 2, after Saul is removed from the throne, David is crowned king over the house of Judah. And then, in 2 Samuel 5, he is crowned king over all Israel, the Lord saying to him, “You shall be shepherd of my people Israel.” And David is a good king, the best king Israel ever had, a

better king than they deserved. He rules with righteousness and justice. He governs according to the word and the will of the Lord. And God gives His people peace and prosperity under David's rule. But the highlight and defining mark of David's reign happens when God makes him this promise in 1 Chronicles 17:7-14 [READ].

The Lord recounts how He took a shepherd and made him into a warrior and king. And then He promises to make a great name of David, to subdue all his enemies, and to build him a house. David was making plans to build God a house, a temple, and God says, "No, I'm going to build you a house. Not a physical dwelling place, but a kingdom. After you die, I will raise up one of your offspring and give Him a kingdom and a throne. But his throne will last forever, and his kingdom will be everlasting." God



promises David that one of his descendants will rule as king over an eternal kingdom on an eternal throne.

And what does the Bible tell us about Jesus? Isaiah 9:7 predicts, “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.” The child born will reign on the throne of David. Or Jeremiah 23:5, “Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal

wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.” In Luke 1 Mary is told, “And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” In Matthew 2 the wise men come to Jerusalem asking, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews?” In Matthew 27, Jesus affirms to Pilate that He is a king, the Roman soldiers mock him as a king, and a sign is placed over his head saying, “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.” Jesus was recognized as King from before his coming all the way through His death on the cross. And after His resurrection and ascension, Paul speaks in Ephesians 1 of God’s great might “that he worked in Christ

when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.” Jesus is reigning as King even now, both in the hearts of His people, the church, and from His throne in heaven at the right hand of God the Father. He is the King. Where David ruled over a specific group of people in a particular place for a short period of time, Jesus is the true and better David who will rule all of God’s people, and who will reign over all creation forever and ever.

David, the unlikely one, is shepherd, warrior, and king.

Jesus, the even more unlikely one in his incarnation, is the better Shepherd, the greater Warrior, and the eternal King.

But Jesus’ in this is not finished yet. While His roles of

shepherd, warrior, and king were all inaugurated in His first coming, they were not completed. In the spirit of Advent where we wait with expectancy and anticipation, there is more to come. There is **a final fulfillment**. In His role as the Good Shepherd, Revelation 7:17 says, “For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.” Jesus will be the Shepherd to His people forever, leading us, providing for us, comforting us. In His role as Warrior, 1 Corinthians 15 says that at His second coming, He will destroy every rule and authority and power, and all His enemies will be put under His feet, including the last enemy to be destroyed: death. And Revelation 17:14 says, “They [the Antichrist and the kings of the earth] will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and

King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful.” In the end, Jesus will be the Victor over all His enemies, the final Warrior. And in His role as King, there may be no other passage of Scripture that captures it as dramatically as Revelation 19:11-16 [READ]. Jesus will rule and reign as King forever and ever.

This Christmas, I want you to see Jesus as more than a baby in a manger. As the true and better David, Jesus was and is and will be a Shepherd to His people. Jesus was and is and will be a Warrior, defeating His enemies. And Jesus was and is and will be King of kings and Lord of lords. The question I want you to ask yourself this morning is this: is Jesus YOUR Shepherd? Do you follow Him and allow Him to guide and feed and protect you? Is Jesus YOUR Warrior? Do you allow Him to fight for and defend

you? Is Jesus YOUR King? Do you bow the knee to Him and submit to His rule over your life? This Christmas I can't think of a better gift than the one God has made available to you through His Son: the gift of life. Will you receive that gift, acknowledging Jesus as the true and better David, your Shepherd, your Warrior, your King?