

MINISTRY BY MAIL
Lutheran Conference of Confessional Fellowship
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Second Sunday after Trinity, June 5, 2016

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(Hymns found in The Lutheran Hymnal, CPH, 1941)
Hymns: 566, 532, 580:1-5, 521:1-4, 644.
Lessons: Psalm 45:1-7, Romans 13:1-7, Luke 20: 19-26.
Sermon Text: 1 Samuel 16:1-13
Sermon by Pastor M. H. Eibs

In the name of Jesus Christ, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

Is there truly a God who rules and guides all things? There are many answers given to that question, probably more negative answers than positive. The atheist says that there is no God. The agnostic says he does not know if there is a God. People all over the globe say there are many gods and they bow down to one or several idols. Some people have said that God is dead, and, of course, a dead God cannot rule over the world and guide its destinies. Other people think of a God which is some blind force in nature.

All of these ideas are false and originate from the heart of sinful, unbelieving people. Let us find out from the Bible the truth about God. There is only one true God. ***“The Lord he is God; there is none else beside him.”*** Deuteronomy 4:35. The Bible reveals this God to us as the Triune God: Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Matthew 28:19. The Bible Says: ***“The Lord is the true God; He is the living God and an everlasting King.”*** Jeremiah 10:10. This God rules over all things with His power. The Psalmist says: ***“Our God is in the heavens: He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased.”*** Psalm 115:3.

Is this true God still active in the world today, or do things just happen by chance? Does God have anything to say about the various governments in the world today or does man guide his own destiny? If God does rule the world as the Bible says, then He must also choose the leaders He wants according to His purposes. May we learn this from our text which tells how God chose a leader for His people of Israel, and then apply it to the various governments in the world today and also to the Christian Church on earth. Let us learn:

GOD CHOOSES HIS LEADERS FOR HIS PURPOSES

1. **As taught by the anointing of David as King of Israel;**
2. **As applied to governments in the world today;**
3. **As applied to the Church.**

“The Lord said unto Samuel, how long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel?” In the days of Samuel, the prophet of Israel, the people of that nation had asked for a king to rule over them. Prior to that time the Israelites had a form of government called a theocracy. God ruled over them. But they saw that the nations around them had kings and they wanted one also. So God told Samuel to anoint Saul as king over Israel. Saul was a good king at the beginning of his reign. But later he became disobedient and God rejected him, as our text says. When Samuel became anxious about the welfare of Israel with a king ruling over the nation after God had rejected him, and mourned for Saul for a long time, God told Samuel to anoint another man as king. He said ***“Fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse, the Bethlehemite; for I have provided me a king among his sons.”*** Here our text specifically says that God chose a leader for Israel. He had decided already who that man was who should be the next king of Israel.

King Saul was still permitted to rule for a time after he had become disobedient to the Lord. At the right time, as chosen by the Lord, another king would take Saul’s place. In order not to alarm the people in this matter, God told Samuel to tell Jesse at Bethlehem: ***“I am come to sacrifice to the Lord.”*** Jesse then was to gather all his sons together for this divine service at Bethlehem.

God directed all things on this occasion to show that He indeed was the One who would choose the next leader of Israel. God told Samuel: ***“I will show thee what thou shalt do, and thou shalt anoint unto me whom I name unto thee.”*** So it was that Jesse brought his sons to the service of sacrifice at Bethlehem. Samuel had to learn that not he but the Lord would choose the man who was to be anointed as king. ***“And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, surely the Lord’s anointed is before Him.”*** But Eliab, the firstborn son of Jesse, was not the Lord’s choice. God explained to Samuel: ***“Look not on his countenance or on the height of his stature, because I have refused him; for the Lord seeth not as man seeth, for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.”*** God knows the hearts of men and so is able to choose whom He wants for positions of leadership. God does not make mistakes, as man well might by judging only by outward appearances. Thereafter, all the assembled sons of Jesse, one by one, were brought before Samuel. But, none of these were chosen. Asking if Jesse had any other sons, Samuel found out that David, the youngest son, was at home tending to the sheep. This was the one whom the Lord had chosen. The Lord told Samuel: ***“Arise, anoint him, for this is he.”*** Again, our text specifically says that the Lord chose the one He wanted as king of Israel. So, ***“Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brethren, and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward.”*** Having done what the Lord wanted, Samuel went back to his home at Ramah.

Quite possibly David’s father and his brothers wondered why he was the one anointed. They may even have doubted the wisdom of choosing their youngest brother for this responsible position. But, it quite often happens that God chooses men for His work who are without honor before men. Just such men the Lord wants according to His purposes, and then He fills them with His Holy Spirit, giving them the gifts needed for their office, and enabling them to do the work that He has in mind for them.

2.

What about today? May we have this confidence that the Lord chooses the leaders He wants in the various governments in the world today. This also includes dictatorships, and evil governments. God does not will the evil but he does allow it to continue to serve His purpose. Yes, indeed, we may and should have that confidence. This we may learn from our text. Besides this Word of God, we also have another passage in the Bible that God gave us to assure us that He chooses His leaders for His purposes. St. Paul in the book of Romans writes: ***“There is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.”*** Romans 13:1 God says there are no governments in power except those He has ordained. Jesus told the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, the same truths. When Pilate boasted of his power to either condemn or release Jesus, our Savior told him: ***“Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above.”*** John 19:11.

We should know then, that the government we have in our country today is chosen by God. Since our government is God-ordained, we are bound to be obedient to this government in every way that is not contrary to God’s Word. The Bible says: ***“Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers.”*** Romans 13:1. According to the fourth commandment we owe obedience to the government in power. And not only do we owe obedience, but also we owe respect and honor to the God-ordained leaders of our government. We also are bound by the Word of God to pay our taxes for the support of that government. Again the book of Romans teaches us this: ***“Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.”*** Romans 13:7.

For those who are in power, we Christians ought to pray and ask God’s blessings upon them. St. Paul says: ***“I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.”*** I Timothy 2:1-2. Praying for a good government ought to be a part of our prayer life especially in this election year. We all do a lot of talking and thinking about who should be elected as president of our country. We hear and read much about what the candidates for this office believe and what they promise if elected. We also are often confused by what is said, and we tire of listening after several months of electioneering. But one thing is most important, and that is that we go to the Lord in prayer and ask Him to give us a good government, not only for our own personal welfare and prosperity, but also that we as Christians may do the work the Lord has given us to do in the church without any hindrance or restrictions.

One more brief application we may make of the truth we learn in our text. God also chooses the leaders in the Church for His purposes. Who are these leaders? They are the ones in the Church whom the Lord has set over us for our good. God speaks of them in the book of Hebrews when He says: ***“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls.”*** Hebrews 13:17. They are the pastors and teachers in the church and all those in authority in the local congregation as well as the church body.

God chooses these spiritual leaders. He does it in an orderly way through the voting members of the congregation in the case of pastors and teachers and officers of a congregation. He does it through the elected representatives of the congregation at conferences. For pastors and teachers needed in the congregation, call meetings are held. At such meetings God’s blessings are asked. God is implored to supply the need where there is a vacancy. A vote is taken. Sometimes several persons are called before the vacancy is filled. Man judges as best he can according to his limited information and knowledge, and the one whom man chooses is not always the one whom God has chosen. But, in the end, when a pastor or teacher is called and accepts the call in the proper manner, this is the one whom the Lord has chosen to be a spiritual leader for His people. The same thing is true when an officer of the church body or congregation is chosen.

The Lord assures such called ministers and teachers and officers that He has made them spiritual overseers. In the case of pastors especially, the Lord says: ***“Take heed therefore unto your selves and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood.”*** Acts 20:28.

We all ought to pray always for this blessing in the Church that the Lord would supply our needs in giving us faithful pastors, teachers and leaders for the work of spreading the precious gospel of Jesus Christ.

God knows what the future holds in the world. He knows what governments are needed in all circumstances. He knows what pastors and teachers and leaders are needed in the Church for any specific time in history. He guides and rules all things in heaven and earth, as the Bible says: ***“according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus, our Lord.”*** Ephesians 3:11. Let us trust in Him with all confidence. Let us earnestly pray for His blessings upon His chosen leaders. And let us patiently await His purposes to be fulfilled in time and eternity. Amen

First preached August 20, 1972. Edited by Lloyd Greve and Robert Mehlretter.