

## **Living by Faith in a Time of Social Isolation**

*Not as mortals see does God see us*

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Each of us has been called to lead and serve in new and unforeseen ways. For the first time in more than a generation, the predictability of our lives is on hold. But God has already seen the outcome of our battles and equipped us for this time. Not as mortals see does God see us! God looks on us and sees a people fortified for His purposes. In God's eyes, we are not helpless; we are not hopeless; and we are not incapable. Anything but!

We are part of a classic pattern in salvation history. Abraham and Sarah, Moses, Joseph, Rahab, Ruth, Hannah, David, Daniel, Esther, Jeremiah, Mary & Joseph, the Apostles, saints and us! All unlikely candidates in the world's eyes for a role in God's plans for His people. But not as mortals see does God see.

Consider the story of David. God sends the prophet Samuel to Jesse of Bethlehem to anoint one of Jesse's sons king. Here's what happens:

Samuel did what the LORD commanded, and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, "Do you come peaceably?"<sup>5</sup> He said, "Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice." And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

<sup>6</sup>When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, "Surely the LORD's anointed is now before the LORD."<sup>7</sup> But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the LORD does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart."<sup>8</sup> Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. He said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one."<sup>9</sup> Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one."<sup>10</sup> Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen any of these."<sup>11</sup> Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here."<sup>12</sup> He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. The LORD said, "Rise and anoint him; for this is the one."<sup>13</sup> Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. (1Sam 16, 4-13a)

## REFLECTION

“The Lord does not see as mortals see.” What *did* God see in David that everyone – including the prophet Samuel – missed? The word of God tells us that God chose David for what was in his heart. David is referred to as “a man after God’s own heart.” (1Sam 13,14; Acts 13,22) He cultivated an intimate friendship with God in the wilderness, and learned there to rely on God for everything. This became the foundation for composing his psalms we still pray today. Alone and relying on God, David grew fearless, fighting off bears and lions while guarding his father’s sheep. Who would have known he would boldly step forward in faith to bring down Goliath, who had terrorized the Israelite army for forty days? Who would have known that this young person had been fortified unseen in the wilderness for a time of uncertainty, when Israel was constantly under threat from her enemies?

What has God taught you in your wilderness over the years?

Have you had to cope with loss of a loved one or the end of a relationship?

- How did you grow from this experience?

Have you ever had to struggle to make ends meet?

- How did you grow from this experience?

Have you had to care for someone else’s needs, with very little time for your own?

- How did you grow from this experience?

Have there been times when only prayer got you through a trying situation?

- How did you grow from this experience?

You are probably more courageous than you think.

You probably have more faith than you think.

Life’s struggles may have taught you to be more resilient than you realize.

Your sacrifice for others has probably made you more loving than you think.

Your daily prayers and those sown in tears have laid a foundation that is stronger than you think.

Your surrenders to God may in fact be your greatest areas of strength and wisdom for helping others.

St. Paul tells us in his Letter to the Ephesians, that God “has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as He chose us to be holy and blameless before Him in love.” (Eph 3, 3b,4) We have been blessed with blessings that not everyone sees. But it is often at times such as this that we are unexpectedly called to step forward like David, fortified with faith, resilience and skills honed in the wilderness, to lead and serve in ways that we had never considered. Let us learn to listen to what God is telling us in the events of our lives, and to prayerfully trust God in everything, as David did. “For the Lord does not see as mortals see.” The Lord looks at us and sees much more than we ever dreamed possible.