

# BRING IT ON

A NEW YEAR SERMON SERIES

## WINNING APPROVAL (Week 1)

**WELCOME:** What are your New Year's Resolutions for 2017? As you begin your DGroup meeting, take some time for each person to share what they are committing to do this year.

**WORSHIP:** Sing "Shout to the Lord" by Hillsong Worship

### WORD:

Read **1 Samuel 16:1-13**.

The original plan of God for Israel was to be a *theocracy* (a nation led by God through His prophets and elders), but the nation asked for a king "as all the other nations have" (1 Samuel 8:5). God did not want to grant Israel's request but the prophet Samuel was pressured so God allowed it (1 Samuel 8:7-9). Saul was eventually selected not for his leadership skills but for his good looks (1 Samuel 9:2). Saul started well, but his power rose to his head and made ungodly decisions (1 Samuel 13:9-12). So, while Saul was still king, God told the prophet Samuel to anoint a new king, "a man after His own heart" (1 Samuel 13:14).

God directed Samuel to Jesse's house (1 Samuel 16:1) to anoint the new king. Jesse paraded his sons before Samuel. Almost every son of Jesse was rejected, no matter how good-looking they were (1 Samuel 16:6-11). God reminded Samuel that the most important thing about an individual is their heart (Verse 7). God's choice to become the new king wasn't even invited to his own anointing ceremony!

What lessons can we learn from the story of Saul and David?

### IT'S NOT HOW WELL YOU START, IT'S HOW YOU FINISH.

King Saul started well but as his position rose to his head, he started to misuse his power. Pride crept into his heart. When we are controlled by our pride, we forget that God is the one who is really in control and that He alone rules over all. God may have chosen Saul because he was humble, but over time that humility was replaced by a self-serving and destructive pride that destroyed his rule. So it is important to stay grounded on God and not let the power He gives us to go to our heads! Staying grounded allows us to finish well.

- Faithfulness is fundamental to a good finish!
- Think of ways how you can follow through with every goal, plan and resolution you make for 2017.

### GOD LOVES EVERYONE, BUT HIS FAVOR REST UPON THOSE WHO FOLLOW AFTER HIM.

Even though Saul disobeyed God, He still loved Saul but He no longer had God's favor. When the time came to replace Saul, God led him to a boy whose heart follows hard after God (1 Samuel 13:14), a man after His own heart. The truth is, God loves everyone (John 3:16), but only those believe in His Son receive everlasting life (John 1:12). There is a distinction between God's love and favor. God does not rank us in order of importance, nor is His favor something we must compete with one another to earn. Every child of God who comes to Him through faith in Jesus Christ has the favor of God. Read Psalm 5:12. As God's children, we have the favor of God through the righteousness that comes from Christ.

- We see that David was not even invited to His own anointing party. We learn here that sometimes, man will not like or approve of you, but that doesn't mean you do not have God's hand upon you.
- When Saul lost God's favor, he also lost his assignment and revoked his anointing.
- As parents or as friends, it's a natural tendency to favor the ones whose hearts are "closer" to us. Are there people in your life whom you favor more?

- Jesus had 12 disciples whom he all loved, but he had an inner circle of 3, Peter, James and John (Mark 9:2).
- Read Isaiah 66:2 and Luke 4:11. In what ways can you embrace humility and follow after God more this year?

### THE ANOINTING IS GIVEN TO ACCOMPLISH AN ASSIGNMENT.

Anoint literally means “poured over” or “smeared over.” It is a practice in the ancient times to smear or pour oil over one’s head as a sign of the assignment they have been given. God’s anointing is given to people He favors and calls to perform a specific purpose and assignment. When we think of favoritism, we imagine a place of higher status and less responsibility. But God’s favor and anointing comes with great assignments and difficult challenges. David’s new assignment is to be the king of Israel, a much bigger responsibility than taking care of his father’s sheep. But it was in being a shepherd that God prepared his heart and his hands to be a good king.

- Sometimes, we find ourselves in less ideal circumstances because God is developing us for a bigger assignment.
- How would you describe your current assignment? How might you be anointed specifically for that?
- Understand that, you don’t need a bigger assignment to experience greater anointing. Last New Year’s eve, Pastor encouraged us to *be faithful in the little things*. What are the little things that we need to be more obedient in, this year?
- When we received Jesus, He anointed us with His Spirit, as a sign that we belong to Him and to be empowered for the task ahead of us.
- Pastor said, *In order to correctly function, you must first be filled correctly*. What do you fill yourself with?
- Going into 2017, what habits are you looking to create that will keep you filled with the anointing that comes from the Holy Spirit? How will these habits help you to bring a fresh attitude to your current assignment?
- If the favor of God comes with anointing for a big assignment, what is the big assignment that God has given His children? (Matthew 28:19-20)
- Did you seek to be symbolically anointed last Sunday? Why did you seek it? What assignment do you have in mind?

### CHOOSE TO PLEASE GOD OVER THE APPROVAL OF MAN

Even if we do not have a clearer purpose to start 2017, God’s anointing should free us up to see that we have nothing to prove to anyone else, but that we seek to please only one person--God Himself. When we choose to please God, not everyone we know will be happy, but keep seeking after God’s heart anyway. When you have His favor, you have the winning approval. As you face the same battles and the same responsibilities, face each of them with a new perspective and greater passion. We have nothing to prove, and only One to please, so we can fix our eyes on Him and rejoice in the new anointing God gives us every day.

- Whose opinion currently influences you the most? Is their opinion rooted in their relationship with Christ?
- Who in your life pushes you not to prove yourself, but to please God? How often do you listen to them?
- How do you know if you are pursuing the affirmation of God? How will you challenge yourself to seek God and God alone in 2017?

### WORKS:

- Share what you have been learning so far during our prayer and fasting week.
- Pray for our church’s goal (**Each 1 Reach 2 in 12 Months**). Pray for your commitment to reach people for Jesus this year with greater passion. Remember, you are doing this for the Lord and not for man.
- Share with your DGroup mates some of the “little things” you need to grow more obedient in, and let them pray for you.

