

Summer Movies and Faith Series
Everyday Heroes – Aladdin
July 12, 2020

Overarching theme: In 2020, FUMC will be a **Go** church!

Instructions:

When using this material as teacher, feel free to pick and choose the point you want to emphasize in the lesson. The format of the curriculum is designed to have an abundance of information in which to refer as desired.

Core Point:

The past is the past. There is nothing that can be done about it. The past can only be used to gain wisdom for the future. What can change is the future. When we, as God's people, are willing to follow God in our daily lives, God will make a good way in the future. The way may be bumpy at times and have curves, but the process will be filled with God's love and grace.

I Samuel:

The books of Samuel are part of a great history work stretching from Joshua through to King's. This work was influenced by the book of Deuteronomy, and so the collection issues we called the Deuteronomistic History. Looking back from the experience of Babylonian exile, this history work tried to understand how Israel's story in the land of promise came to an end in destruction and exile.

This historian included in his large history many smaller pieces focused on events or persons important to Israel's story. In the books of Samuel, the focus is on a time of change when circumstances led to the establishment of kingship in Israel to replace the loose tribal alliance found in the book of Judges.

In 1 Samuel 8, the elders of Israel insist that the prophet Samuel set a king over them. Almost every episode in the books of Samuel prepares us for and takes us through the challenges and opportunities that come from the transition to kingship. Three key persons dominate the events of this period: The prophet Samuel; Israel's first king, Saul; and Israel second king, David.

Through these persons and events in the stories of first and second Samuel, we also see the working of God's providence. In these books, God doesn't work around leaders in events of the day but through them. – *from the CEB Study Bible, pp. 417-18.*

Reflect on this Scripture:

1 Samuel 16:6-12 NRSV

⁶ When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, "Surely the LORD's anointed is now before the LORD."^[a] ⁷ 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."⁸ Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. He said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one."⁹ Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one."¹⁰ Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen any of these."¹¹ 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."¹² 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."

1 Sam 17:32-40 NRSV ³² David said to Saul, "Let no one's heart fail because of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine."³³ Saul said to David, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are just a boy, and he has been a warrior from his youth."³⁴ But David said to Saul, "Your servant used to keep sheep for his father; and whenever a lion or a bear came, and took a lamb from the flock,³⁵ I went after it and struck it down, rescuing the lamb from its mouth; and if it turned against me, I would catch it by the jaw, strike it down, and kill it."³⁶ Your servant has killed both lions and bears; and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, since he has defied the armies of the living God."³⁷ David said, "The LORD, who saved me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, will save me from the hand of this Philistine." So Saul said to David, "Go, and may the LORD be with you!"³⁸ Saul clothed David with his armor; he put a bronze helmet on his head and clothed him with a coat of mail.³⁹ David strapped Saul's sword over the armor, and he tried in vain to walk, for he was not used to them. Then David said to Saul, "I cannot walk with these; for I am not used to them." So David removed them.⁴⁰ Then he took his staff in his hand, and chose five smooth stones from the wadi, and put them in his shepherd's bag, in the pouch; his sling was in his hand, and he drew near to the Philistine.

Questions to ponder about the passages:

What jumps out at you from these passages?

What is the significance of the statement to Samuel, "they (mortals) look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart"?

Why do you think Saul clothed David with his armor?
What do you think would have happened if David had remained in Saul's armor?

Commentary:

We have a story that reminds us of the unlikely vessels of God's grace. God's choice is David, a shepherd, an eighth son, from the village of Bethlehem, from a family that has no obvious pedigree. The theme of David as an unlikely instrument for Israel's hope continues throughout the story of his early years. We are always in wonder that this man, David, is the one for whom God has prepared us, of whom Hannah sang in hope. Can this boy defeat the Philistine champion? Can this upstart warrior escape the wrath of Saul? Can this fugitive and "outlaw" become a king?

One of the most basic themes of the entire biblical message is that God finds possibilities for grace in the most unexpected places and through the most unlikely persons. To choose the youngest son who labors as a shepherd, to be Israel's future king is to ignore the usual arrangements for power and influence in the ancient world. Unlike Saul's father, Kish, David's father, Jesse, is not described as "a man of wealth" (9:1, the word can also mean "power").

Related to this theme of God's unexpected choices is our tendency, like Samuel, to confuse appearance for reality or like Saul to rely on wielding armor rather than the real gift of God. David refuses the armor, and he takes only his staff, his sling, and five smooth stones – the equipment of a shepherd (v. 40) – to meet the Philistine. – *Adapted from the New Interpreter's Bible Commentary, Vol II. pp 1099-1100; 1112*

This week, Aladdin.

Aladdin is a timeless tale of a **diamond-in-the-rough**, street-urchin Aladdin, and his journey that began as a **nobody** on the streets of Agrabah.

In the Bible we read of another **diamond-in-the-rough**, shepherd-boy David, and his journey that began as the 8th son of Jesse of Bethlehem. In a world where being first-born was everything, and eighth born was an also-ran, David was, in the eyes of his society, a **nobody** from nowhere.

Early on in his story, Aladdin unwittingly meets undercover Princess Jasmine going rogue. Dressed in street clothes, she snuck out of her cloistered palace for a day to see what life was like for the ordinary people of her realm. Aladdin is smitten!! But in time he realizes the truth about Jasmine – she's a **princess**. So she was not only out of his league, she was out of his universe!

And according to royal law Jasmine was required to marry a Prince and Aladdin was clearly the furthest thing from a Prince that Agrabah had to offer.

However, in the course of time, 'diamond in the rough' Aladdin finds himself in the Cave of Wonders, discovers a magic lamp, and encounters an amazing Genie played by Will Smith. The Genie informs Aladdin that he is the recipient of three wishes, one of which Aladdin uses to become a 'Prince', to provide an opportunity for courting his beloved Jasmine. With the help of an impressive Genie-inspired marketing plan, Aladdin becomes fictitious Prince Ali from the made up land of Ababwa:

Well, how does this storyline relate to 'diamond in the rough' Biblical David? Again, in his world, David was least likely to do anything really significant. He couldn't be further down the line of royal succession. And there are no Genies in the Bible! But there is a God who sees potential in David that no one else sees. And because David trusts in God (rather than Saul's Armor), God does remarkable things through David and his 'five smooth stones.' David becomes one of God's **"everyday heroes."**

Could God do the same through us?

Questions to Ponder for accountability in the group:

In these passages, what is the main practical lesson you get from it?

How are you a "diamond in the rough?"

In what ways might God be polishing you now?

Have you ever "put on Saul's armor" or tried to be like someone else? How did that work out for you?

David uses five smooth stones to live into his unique gifts. How are you living into your own unique gifts today?

Activity of for the life of a disciple:

1. Remember to find encouragement for the day by reading the daily devotional from FUMC.
2. Ponder and pray on this scripture this week: I Samuel 17:40
Then he took his staff in his hand, and chose five smooth stones from the wadi, and put them in his shepherd's bag, in the pouch; his sling was in his hand, and he drew near to the Philistine.
3. What can you do this week to live into your unique gifts/calling and be an "Everyday Hero?"