

#nofilter

1. #irl

Start off with feedback from Sunday's message. What did those that were there - or those that have caught up online - take away from it? What encouraged them, what informed them and what challenged them?

Read 1 Samuel 16.1-13

'But the Lord said to Samuel, 'Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.'

- Talk about your social media use. How much time do you spend consuming social media each day, on average? Have you experienced any of the negative impacts we talked about – the comparison trap, lower self image, 'fomo' (fear of missing out), bullying, or even lack of sleep?
- How do you think David felt being excluded from the VIP feast? Was it a snub or just the natural order of things? In what ways have you felt passed up, underestimated or rejected?
- People look at the outward appearance. To what extent do you judge your own worth based on outside measures? What are those outside measures?
- How much do you experience the reality that you are God's masterpiece and his chosen instrument? Do you feel this to be true or do you struggle to accept it? What could you do to embrace this truth more fully?
- Why do you think God affirmed David's worth before ever getting him to do a single thing for Him? Why do you think having security in your own value and worth is key to being used as one of God's heroes?
- Something gains value if it is fully owned by someone special. What areas of your life would you like God to have greater ownership of?

Big Idea: 'Don't ever base your worth on outside measures. Rather, know that God has made you in His image and chosen you for great and heroic things.'

Pray together in 2s and 3s. Pray about any negative impacts that social media may be having on you and those around you.

Pray for a greater sense of your intrinsic value – how precious you are as one of God's masterpieces, created in Christ Jesus. Pray for God to lead you into the great things that He has got for you. Pray that God would use you as one of His heroes.

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2. #ftw

Start off with feedback from Sunday's message. What did those that were there - or those that have caught up online - take away from it? What encouraged them, what informed them and what challenged them?

Read 1 Samuel 17.20-53

⁴⁶ This day the Lord will deliver you into my hands, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head. This very day I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds and the wild animals, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. ⁴⁷ All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give all of you into our hands.'

- *'What will be done?'* v26. Why did David see things differently to everyone else? Do you find it easy or hard to view difficulties and set backs as opportunities?
- *'How wicked your heart is'* v28. Have you ever been in a situation where you had to face discouragement and attack, not just from the giant, but also from those who were close to you, and supposed to be supporting you?
- *'The Lord who rescued me?'* v37. What experiences have you had, if any, that have proved God's faithfulness and help in difficult situations in the past? How has that affected your faith?
- v39. Why did David choose to fight Goliath without the 'filter' of Saul's armour? Have you ever been in a situation where others have tried to get you to do your Christian life in exactly the same way they do theirs, and it hasn't fit?
- What is your giant right now? And what weapons does it use against you? Explain how it affects you.
- v47. Do you truly believe that the battle is the Lord's, or do you struggle to have faith for that? How can you take the fight to the enemy and defeat your giant?

Big Idea: *'Don't let a giant set the rules of engagement. We fight with spiritual weapons, in the name of Jesus. The Living God, God of the Angel Armies, will rescue us from every giant we face.'*

Break down into smaller groups and pray for one another. Take time to name the giants that you're facing right now. Pray for a renewed faith. Pray in the authority of the name of Jesus, the Living God, for that situation to be completely changed.

Pray about some of the giants you see affecting those around you – your work place, your community, your friends, your city. Pray about the giants that are set against us as a church.

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3. #epicfail

Start off with feedback from Sunday's message. What did those that were there - or those that have caught up online - take away from it? What encouraged them, what informed them and what challenged them?

Read 1 Samuel 21

¹² David took these words to heart and was very much afraid of Achish king of Gath. ¹³ So he feigned insanity in their presence; and while he was in their hands he acted like a madman, making marks on the doors of the gate and letting saliva run down his beard.

¹⁴ Achish said to his servants, 'Look at the man! He is insane! Why bring him to me? ¹⁵ Am I so short of madmen that you have to bring this fellow here to carry on like this in front of me? Must this man come into my house?'

- David made catastrophic mistakes because he stopped trusting God and gave into fear. What areas in your life cause you to fear? (fear of failure, fear of rejection, fear of being unloved etc)
- Can you identify with David in this story – making bad choices and seeing things go downhill fast? Have you ever had a similar experience?
- Do you have a problem person in your life – someone who intimidates you or makes you act in ways that you know are wrong? Who are they and why do they have such power over you?
- What situations in your life do you find hardest to deal with? Where do you tend to compromise and why?
- Read Psalm 56. David's change of heart is remarkable. What can we learn from the way in which he repents and recovers his trust in God? What factors may have helped him renew his faith? (Look at 1 Samuel 22.1-5 for clues.)
- Are there things in your life that you need to repent of and find fresh faith trust in God, instead of being afraid?

Big Idea: 'Repentance is the way we recover from failure. We own our failure, we change our mindset and we renew our trust in our Father God.'

Pray in 2s and 3s for each other. Pray for the problem people and the problem situations that you face. Pray for freedom from some of these areas of compromise and failure. Pray for a renewed trust in God and the confidence to not be afraid ever again.

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4. #swipeleft

Start off with feedback from Sunday's message. What did those that were there - or those that have caught up online - take away from it? What encouraged them, what informed them and what challenged them?

Read Micah 6.8

*He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.*

This is a Special session, supplemental to the main series. The point of this discussion is to be real and practical about the issues raised.

- How did you find Hannah's story of founding Just Love and the way it's grown in influence and size over the last three or four years?
- Do you think that we as Christians engage with issues of justice enough, or do we still think that it's just for the keen few?
- PERSONALLY – Lifestyle Choices. What did you think about the stats about the way the wealthy Western countries use more than their fair share of the earth's resources? What proposals do you think you could take on board – cutting down meat, limiting short haul flights? Any other ideas?
- Why is it a challenge for us to change our lifestyles to live more sustainably? What things would make it easier for us?
- GLOBALLY – Advocacy & Prayer. How do you feel about the statistic of 45 million people globally being involved in slavery? How could we get involved with an advocacy campaign such as #notonmyscreen? How could we as a group pray for issues like this?
- LOCALLY – Taking Action. What's your experience been of volunteering and serving with an agency committed to justice for those most needy in Bristol? Again, why is it a challenge and how could we make things easier for ourselves?

Big Idea: 'Acting justly will have implications on us Personally, as we change our lifestyle, Globally as we engage with advocacy and prayer, and Locally as we take action.'

Pray together as a group for God's help and strength to live more justly and sustainably. Pray that we wouldn't be paralysed by the size of the problem, or driven by guilt. But pray that we as a group can demonstrate a love of justice that challenges and inspires those around us.

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5. #blessed

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