

**A GAME OF THRONES**  
**January 12, 2014 –Ordination and Installation –I Samuel 13: 8-14**  
**The Church of the Covenant**

At last year's congregational retreat at Laurelville we all did a program entitled "Walk Through the Old Testament" and the memory device they used was a series of hand motions accompanying parts of the Old Testament that reminded us of the sequence and content of that part of scripture. It was as exciting and engaging for this crusty old Calvinist preacher as it was for the youngest attendee. At one point there was the sequence of the three thrones of the three great kings of Israel --King Saul (I Samuel 9 thru 2 Samuel 1), the first King; King David, (2 Samuel 2 thru 1 Kings 2) the second King; King Solomon, (I Kings 1-11) the third King. And all these chapters in scripture were admirably reduced to this –

King Saul had NO HEART for God; King David had a WHOLE HEART for God; King Solomon had HALF a HEART for God. The hand motions are these and I will prompt you to do this whenever I say –Saul had NO HEART; David had a WHOLE HEART; Solomon had HALF a HEART for God.

*King Saul had no heart for God.* To be sure he was called into spiritual leadership by God. The people had prayed for a king, God had said "Are you really sure you want a king or would freedom as a free people be better?" but God heard and answered the prayer of the people for central authority. Saul LOOKED like a king. He was everything I am not –tall and stately and impressive and strong, mighty in battle. He was a king sent from central casting. He was anointed by Samuel the prophet. The anointing oil was a sign of the empowering of a spiritual leader to serve, even as is the laying on of hands today the sign of people called by God to serve. And Saul started out as a leader very well. He looked like a king and he acted like a king. He had his successes and his failures. But as he consulted witches and soothsayers, as his love of power overcame his love for God the true character of his heart was revealed to all and most especially to God. He loved the throne of his own power more than he loved God. He had no heart for God. His was about an earthly kingdom not a heavenly one. His kingship was taken from him long before he actually lost it. The reason was he had no heart for God. He looked good on the outside but he was empty on the inside. He descended into madness, a sad misbegotten figure representing to us all people who start out well but end badly. He wound up defeated and dead on Mt. Gilboa, his son Jonathan dead along side him, his lineage cut off, no more kings in the line of Saul.

Christian leader –we lose the blessing of God when our heart is far from Him. We may look like an elder or a deacon or a pastor but if we have no heart for God then we will be defeated by the battles of life. The battles are the Lord's so our heart, our whole heart, must be the Lord's as well.

*King David had a WHOLE HEART for God.* To be sure he was called into spiritual leadership by God. The prophet Samuel led by God is directed to come to the house of Jesse where God has chosen one of his sons to replace King Saul. Jesse has 7 sons but all of them so assume that little David could not possibly be the next king of Israel that they leave him out on the hillside to tend the sheep. He doesn't look like a king; he doesn't act like a king. He is ruddy and comely in appearance and more inclined to poetry and psalm writing than to battle. God has chosen none of Jesse's other sons to be king, although every one of them looks like a king on the outside. Finally, Samuel calls for David and anoints him with the oil of leadership; David is the one anointed in the power of the Holy Spirit to lead and to be king. Everyone else may have only seen a shepherd boy, but God looked into David's heart, and God saw a KING. It wasn't the calling that made him a king and it wasn't the anointing that made him a king, it was his HEART, his WHOLE HEART that made him a king. What flowed from David was not just victory in battle over every Goliath in life but what flowed from David was also the beauty of the Psalms. He was not a

perfect man. He erred and failed and sinned. It was taken from him to build the Temple in Jerusalem because of his failings. But nothing could take his whole heart away from him. Nothing could take David's heart away from the Lord. He was ultimately successful in life and in his calling to be a spiritual leader because his WHOLE HEART was focused and directed upon the Lord. Whether he failed or succeeded, whether he sinned or was righteous, whether he got it right or he got it wrong the secret of David's success was that his whole heart always remained focused on the heart of the Almighty. It is why the Lord Jesus Christ was born of the house and lineage of King David, not of King Saul. Because the whole-hearted Living Savior and King of Kings, Jesus Christ, is ALWAYS born through whole-hearted spiritual leadership dedicated whole-heartedly to His name.

Christian leader –do you stand in the lineage of King Saul or King David? Is your heart wholly focused on the heart of God we know and have experienced through the living presence of the heart of a living Savior in Jesus Christ? King Saul had NO HEART for God; King David had a WHOLE HEART for God.

*King Solomon had HALF a HEART for God.* Like Saul and David before him he was called by God to serve as King and like his two predecessors he was anointed by God's power to be King. He began well. When God asked him what gift he wanted as king, he did not ask for power or for might or for riches or material blessings, rather he asked for spiritual WISDOM. God was so impressed with this request from the young king that he also granted King Solomon success and blessing, riches and power. King Solomon began well by seeking only spiritual wisdom but then God added wealth and power as well. And Solomon lost his way because of his riches and success. The kings of the earth beat a path to his door seeking his wisdom. The Kingdom of Israel achieved its greatest size and power under his kingship. He was wealthy beyond imagining, palaces and concubines. He built one of the grandest temples of his day, the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem. What his father, King David, was prohibited from doing, God granted Solomon the wealth and the power to accomplish. But in the process King Solomon lost a part of his heart for God. He had a divided heart –part of it loved God, part of it loved worldly things and success. And if you read the story carefully you realize that the divided heart of King Solomon was to result in the divided Kingdom of Israel. After Solomon, Israel broke up into its constituent and warring factions and tribes again. A divided heart in the spiritual leadership resulted in a divided kingdom on earth. Having a divided heart for God results in divided churches and denominations and families and communities. America, if I may say the reason we are a divided nation today, why there is such division and acrimony and infighting is because our heart is divided toward God. We are not one nation together and indivisible. Because we are not one nation UNDER GOD and we are not One nation Under God because our heart has gone after other things –our heart has been stolen by the success and the riches of the world. We worship the idols of this world rather than fixing our whole heart upon God.

Christian leader –do you stand in the lineage of King Saul or King David or King Solomon? Is your heart divided between your love for God and your love for the things of this world? Is your heart and your life and your focus wholly fixed upon God...or upon something less? King Saul had NO HEART for God; King David had a WHOLE HEART for God; King Solomon had a HALF HEART for God.

King Saul is supposed to wait for the prophet Samuel in order to offer sacrifice to God. But Samuel is delayed and does not come. So the no-hearted King, who really does not believe in God nor in His commandments, takes matters into his own hands and offers the sacrifice himself. Saul has revealed his truest and innermost heart. The prophet Samuel then arrives and declares to Saul these words: *“Now your kingdom shall not continue. The Lord has sought out a man after his own heart (King David) and the Lord has appointed him to be prince over his people, because you (King Saul) have not kept what the Lord commanded you.” (1 Samuel 13: 14)* The Lord has sought out a man after God's own heart and that

man was David, the man with a WHOLE HEART for God. The Lord is always seeking men after His own heart. The Lord is always seeking women after His own heart. The Lord is always seeking young people and children after His own heart. He seeks whole-hearted people, not no hearted people. He seeks all of our heart, not just half of our heart. The Lord has sought out spiritual leaders with a heart after His own heart.

By the way, the heart that is mentioned here has nothing to do with the emotions. It has nothing to do with our feelings. Our emotions may be up or they may be down. Our feelings may be strong or they may be weaker. "I don't feel like going to church today" has nothing to do with the Biblical heart. "I don't get anything out of worship anymore" has nothing to do with a biblical view of the heart. "I feel God is far away because of my medical problems" has nothing to do with the biblical heart. Our emotions and our feelings are variable and changeable, as variable as the weather and as changeable as the tides of the sea. But the BIBLICAL HEART of which this refers is the same heart as beats within the breast of God. It is HESED, the biblical word meaning "*steadfast love and faithfulness*" It is steadfast, not changeable. It is steadfast love –it is the same love that drew Jesus Christ to the cross to sacrifice Himself and to die for us and our salvation. It is never changing, always present, always constant; it is unshakable; it is immovable. It is faithful to its Word and faithful towards whom it loves. Our emotions and our feelings change with the moment. But God's heart never changes.

Hear the whole heart of King David sing in the words of the Psalms –"*It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to Thy name, Most High, to declare Thy steadfast love in the morning and Thy faithfulness by night.*" (Psalm 92: 1)

The BIBLICAL HEART is that place of absolute constancy, trust, unchanging love and devotion, undiminished affection and passionate focus on the object of one's desire. God's love never changes. He will never leave us nor forsake us. His heart is unconditional. He shall not be moved. Jesus Christ and His heart for us is the same yesterday, today and forever! When you look at the cross and you see the blood of Jesus, that's Jesus being whole-hearted for God and for us. That's having a heart after God's own heart.

King Saul had NO HEART; King David had a WHOLE HEART; King Solomon had HALF a HEART. A GAME OF THRONES. --What kind of heart do you want to have toward God TODAY???????

Amen.

*By: The Reverend Dr. Stuart D. Broberg, The Church of the Covenant, Washington, PA  
IF THIS HAS BLESSED YOU, PLEASE PASS IT ALONG TO A FRIEND!*