

June 13, 2021

“Learning not to Believe (Our Eyes)”

What happens when you can't believe your eyes?

I have been more than amazed by the kinds of scenes appearing on sidewalks and other flat surfaces all over the world. For example, this picture of *a boy sitting on a lily-pad* reaching out to a giant frog. Doesn't seem very safe, does it? Or how about *this dangerous gash in the earth over a public sidewalk? How about a bookshelf for a house?* Is that *Giant spoon* really inside that semi? Can you believe what you are seeing? And what kind of reality is this opening beneath the city streets – *waterfall jumping anyone?*

All of these images *completely fool our minds*. Each of them seems as real as can be. Knowing they are illusions - we still couldn't overcome *the feelings and the responses* they draw out of us. This is the challenge we see in our text from First Samuel today.

Samuel has come to anoint a new king. God has told him - the new king will be one of Jesse's sons - invite them to a religious party and I will point out my choice. After some complaining, Samuel does as directed by God and the party is in full swing. One by one the young men - potential kings all - pass by for inspection. **And Samuel is no better than the rest of us.** He sees one of David's older brothers - you know, *the guy who spent a lot of time at the gym, is known for his winning personality and has a sparkling smile?* Surely this is the one....surely this is the Lord's anointed....that's what Samuel thought...and it is what we would have thought as well. Especially when the stakes are high - we often revert back to the lowest common denominator – first appearances.

In the movie, "*Captain America*," a secret project is being planned and they are looking to recruit a special soldier. The man who wants to choose the soldier to be selected is played by Tommy Lee Jones. Who doesn't like Tommy Lee Jones? He, like us, wants to stick with traditional criteria - even for a new program. He doesn't believe an unconventional, skinny kid can possibly be a strong and dedicated soldier.

(Play clip from *Captain America* in which the kid he doesn't want jumps on a dummy grenade to save everyone thinking he will die.)

"He's still skinny." Indeed – it is hard to win us over once we have made up our minds about some thing or someone. We struggle to discover what God is doing underneath the surface.

Our minds are often fooled by what we see. But as God's children who are becoming fit for God's kingdom, we are learning to trust what we see with the eyes of our hearts. Go ahead - *look on the outside. Then look deeper.* Be the children of the most high God who live and look by the power of the heart. It is more trustworthy and more life-giving than using our eyes alone. Don't believe your eyes. Believe your heart - and the God who sees, knows, and shapes it.