

# Sermon Title: The Eighth Candidate

- **Introduction**
  - Upcoming election and hosting of an election hustings in the Minster.
  - Clergy concerns about political involvement and God's perceived role.
- **Christian Responsibility and Politics**
  - Importance of evaluating politicians' visions against the Kingdom of God.
  - Questions on policies: unity vs. division, support vs. scapegoating, compassion vs. suspicion.
- **Church and Politics**
  - Response to why the church is involved in politics: Jesus' command to love our neighbor.
  - Reference to Archbishop Desmond Tutu's view on the Bible's political implications.
- **Biblical Context: 1 Samuel 15:34-16:13**
  - Story of Samuel's mission to find a new king for Israel.
  - God's regret over making Saul king and sending Samuel to anoint David.
  - Samuel's dangerous mission due to Saul's ongoing reign.
- **Qualities of Leadership**
  - The elders of Bethlehem's fear upon Samuel's arrival.
  - God's rejection of Eliab based on appearance; preference for heart over outward appearance.
  - Current election's superficiality and lack of serious discussion.
- **Divine Perspective on Leadership**
  - God's focus on the heart, not outward appearance.
  - Warning against placing faith entirely in political solutions or parties.
  - David as the unexpected eighth son, representing God's alternative and deeper dimension.
- **Engagement in Political Process**
  - Encouragement to vote thoughtfully and prayerfully for representatives aligning with God's Kingdom.
  - Reminder of Samuel's words: "The Lord has not chosen any of these."
  - Caution against unreserved faith in political candidates and ideologies.
- **Ultimate Allegiance to God's Kingdom**
  - Kingdom of Christ as transcendent and not of this world.
  - Avoid defining oneself strictly by political affiliations.
  - Need for the 'eighth candidate,' akin to David, representing a deeper hope and justice.
- **Conclusion**
  - Call to remember the one who judges by the heart and establishes God's reign of peace and mercy.
  - Emphasis on the one who chooses us, represented by the cross.

## Questions:

1. In 1 Samuel 16:7 where God says, *"Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature... for the Lord looks on the heart."* How might this principle guide our choices in political or community leadership?
2. What are the implications of God expressing regret over Saul's kingship, and how does this shape our understanding of divine sovereignty and human responsibility? How do we reconcile this with our belief in God's omniscience and perfect will?
3. How does the concept of 'regime change' in the Bible, as seen in the anointing of David, relate to the idea of political change in our contemporary society? Discuss the risks Samuel took and how this reflects on the role of faith in navigating political landscapes.
4. In what ways do you think our current political candidates reflect or fail to reflect the values of the Kingdom of God as described in the sermon?
5. How does the idea that "God looks at the heart" influence our personal conduct and interactions within our community and beyond?
6. How we can balance active political engagement with the understanding that our ultimate hope and allegiance lie in the Kingdom of God.