

Wm. Blake Spencer | Samuel 16: 14-23

He's Got the Blues...

It was not a good day for old King Saul. One could probably say that he was in a funk, down in the dumps, **held up and heavy** with the blues and was simply not in a good mood.

The scriptures go as far to say he had an "evil spirit" hovering like a black cloud on one of those Tennessee afternoons in the spring when the neighborhood alert sirens go off and everyone rushes to the basement....if you have one.

**To say the least the King wasn't in a good place....and that God filled him with an evil spirit really means that Saul was wrestling with some sort of affliction.... Something bigger than a mood swing. We could also say God allows Saul to mutter and putter about in the trouble of the day....there was plenty of that to go around.**

I can remember such a day. A teacher standing over a student saying, "It might do you some good to sit right where you are and think about what you've done."

I suppose a person could ponder other things in such a situation....like the things that were left undone....or the things that were totally messed up.

**The not so good day, reaches well beyond this one King sitting on his throne filled with melancholy and angst.**

**It's not such a good moment for the nation of Israel either. So as the nation teeters and totters the King sits in his chair....holding up all these burdens on his shoulders....and not doing such a good job at it in this scene.**

I'm not thinking it is a pleasant thing for a King to be in a really bad mood, in an emotional dilemma....in particular it had to be hard for those people who were required to be in his presence....those people whose job it was to serve the King.

"What are we going to do? We can't let him stay like this much longer. He is unbearable. I mean really....I already have enough to take care of, enough to deal with. We've got to figure out what to do. I just can't take it when he gets like this!"

**It seems Saul's servants have been in this corner before. This isn't the first time his troubled mind and spirit has ruled the day. But thankfully experience has given the servants a few clues as to how they might soothe old Saul's dilemma. So they do what good caretakers do....they seek out comfort for the one they serve.**

Isn't good to have people around to know just what you need when things aren't going well.

**"She needs her favorite stuffed bear....and everything will be fine."** "Just leave him alone for a bit....be good after a few moments of silence."

**"Come over here and I'll rub your neck."**

"Here, I play your favorite song. It always makes you feel better."

**And that was it. Saul would be soothed by music. So the servants seek out some tunes. They don't surprise Saul but invite him to allow them to bring some music into his courts and he agrees.**

In ancient and modern literature music is often associated with healing powers. And so in this story we see unfold before us....God uses music and a skilled musician to provide calm and peace and comfort.

**It is David who God would use again. You see, it's not by chance David is hanging around at the right place at the right time. It's not some hap hazard happenstance.**

**God was at work.**

**God was preparing for the future. God was doing for the King and the nation of Israel what they could not do for themselves. God's sovereign power and love were at work.**

The New Interpreters Bible writes it this way: "David's skills as a musician, singer, and composer of songs become a standard part of the tradition about him. He is called the "beloved singer of Israel"

**Surely this story from our past makes sense to you faithful ones who live in a city named Nashville....for you have encountered more than once the lure and talent of a singer, songwriter.**

**Surely the impact music holds on our lives does not escape you who live in a city overflowing with notes and tunes and voices and even a circle monument called Musica!**

*So.....it is David* who stands before Saul and gets his attention...it is David who strums and hums and sings. It is David who God uses to bring new perspective to the old King who has struggled with a nation grappling with the old traditions of a covenant community in conflict with the emerging ideology of a royal community.

**The nation is in transition....they are a people trying to be what they are not yet....and they are a people led by a leader who cannot see the way into the future.**

So, with music in this one named David....God offers a prelude to what is to come. Though Saul is the one who brings David permanently into his service after this momentary session of healing music....it is God who breaks open the way for David to become the messenger of hope for all of Israel.

And this new found hope all started with a song.

**Music..... God has and continues to use music as a source for joy and healing. It's not by chance we are so passionate about the music we encounter in our lives. Music was built into our DNA.**

You might say music is the very hovering Spirit of God at work in the first days of creation.....

or the presence of clouds like pillars traveling before and behind the people as they wander into the land on the other side of the parted Red Sea....

or the burning bush of Mt. Sinai,

or the flying dove of the Jordan river baptism.....

The Spirit of God known moving and working through all the genres of music throughout the ages.

**Without a doubt music stirs our soul and opens us to realities....and no doubt God joyfully, and energetically co-mingles with the songs of life....guiding us all the while with each note and lyric.**

We have a deep connection with music. It is part of us....and it sticks with us. Music defines us.

We love music so much that even if the music died we would probably write a song about that. The day.....the music.....died..... I started singin' .....

"bye-bye, miss american pie."

Drove my chevy to the levee,

But the levee was dry.

Them good old boys were drinkin' whiskey and rye

And singin', "this'll be the day that I die.

"this'll be the day that I die."

What a gift it is to live in this era.....gifted with generations of music....so much music....in every style. What a joy it is to be able to listen to and sing songs telling our story.....songs of our faith.

What deep gratitude we must have that God co-mingles with the music that fills our memories, defines our present and gives us a hint into tomorrow.

**Indeed, God has used music in the past to heal and lead. Perhaps the time has come again to put down all our words and opinions and fears ....to put down our debates and agendas..... to put down our impatience and critique....and let the music fill us and heal us and change us.**

It happened then....and it can happen now....that is why we call it good news.