

Cute, Gorgeous and Good-Looking

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Preacher: Dave Fuller

[0 : 00] This is the evening service at Holy Trinity on the 29th of May 2005. The preacher is Dave Fuller.

His sermon is entitled Cute, Gorgeous and Good Looking and is based on 1 Samuel 16, verses 1-13.

Firstly, thanks for having me tonight here at Holy Trinity. It's good to be back again, particularly amongst the youth group who I did a little visit the other night. It was nice to see you all at your sleepover.

I had been out at Deep Creek Anglican Church speaking at a youth group night, Gospel night, and about 10am I'm riding down Doncaster Road to go back into Collingwood to the God Squad Club Rooms.

I thought, I wonder if Pike is a youth group still going. So I pulled a U here around a corner here and popped in and yep, they're all here having a sleepover. So it was good to see you then. And then some of you last night at the wine and cheese night, which is a lot of fun.

[1 : 04] And I really enjoyed that evening as well. I want to put on notice just before I begin that at the end of what I say, I want to lead a prayer.

It will be a prayer for perhaps those of you who may never have responded to God in Jesus Christ in terms of turning your life over to Him, of turning away from your self-centered orientation and orientating itself toward Him and receiving His forgiveness.

And I want to say at this point how I'll do that. And basically I'll pray a prayer. I'll invite everyone to be quiet and to close your eyes. And if you pray that prayer along with me afterward, then I'm inviting you either to indicate that to me or to Lisa, your youth leader, or to other figures in this particular community whom you trust and whom you know pretty fair dinkum about their faith.

So if you've never made that response before, then I'm going to give that opportunity at the end of the address. I'm not going to get you to come forward and do anything publicly or embarrassing like that.

It's something that you'll be able to pray quietly. And then hopefully if that is the case, you can indicate that later on. Many of you who are older will remember this story, but there was a Coke ad many years ago which won the Best Ad of the Year award for its particular year.

[2 : 30] And it was made here in Australia. And those of you who remember that it was a classic Aussie beach scene. The sun was shining. The surf was good.

And they had this huge beach ball that they were sort of tossing around in the ocean. And it was just absolutely full of these young men and young women, Aussie guys, Aussie girls, enjoying life.

The guys were in their board shorts and they were cute and gorgeous and good looking and nice pecs and lean and good six packs. They had a whole bit. They just looked beautiful.

Really hot, strong, solid looking guys. And girls tell me they look really good. And of course the girls were looking pretty good as well. They're in their bikini tops and there's not one little inch of cellulite there, guys.

They were pure specimens of Aussie girls. Well endowed. And you can sort of imagine where it could go if I went any further, which I won't. But it was that sort of a picture.

[3 : 31] And then in the midst of that there's the can of Coke or the bottle of Coke. Coke adds life. When the guy was interviewed, the guy who made the ad was interviewed, and I hope you're not offended by what I'm about to say, but this is a direct quote.

He said, Oh yeah, in the industry we call them grab-ass ads. And of course the interviewer was a little bit shocked and the board lit up with people complaining about somebody swearing on prime time television.

But the interviewer said, Oh, what do you mean? And he says, Oh look, we know how young guys think. We know how young girls think. We know that that particular stage in their life, their testosterone, their hormones, they're just racing around.

They're really probably at their peak sexually in many, many ways. And we, at that particular moment when we know that they're looking and ogling at each other, that we're going to put a can of Coke in their hands and we know that we've got them.

That's how we sell the product. And it again reminded me that sex sells. And that particular approach is still used by advertisers to this particular day.

[4 : 33] And next Sunday night we're going to look at the OCs. And I've been faithfully taping the OCs on Tuesday night at 8.30 for the last couple of weeks. And I'm going to watch them all in one big session sometime this week.

And what I've watched so far is that fundamental sort of message continues to come through. Many years ago we had a member of God Squad who was a photographer for Harper's Bazaar magazine, a very high-powered fashion magazine.

He got out of the industry and as a consequence came to faith in Jesus Christ because he'd come to a point where he was absolutely disgusted with what he saw going on in the fashion industry.

And I'm talking almost 20 years ago but I remember him saying, you know what they do in the fashion industry? They'll take a photograph of a woman and if there's a blemish on her skin then we just put it through the computer and we'll grab a nice piece of skin from somewhere else and we'll put it across and cover it.

Now we know that goes on now and that's well documented. But I'm talking 20 years ago they were doing that. And the shape of a body, if we think our eyes are a little bit too close then we can manipulate it a little bit with the computer.

[5 : 47] And if, you know, like, you know, the hips are a little bit too big then we can sort of make some changes there. And so what we are seeing on our magazines, whether it be guys or girls, are so often false pictures of reality.

On Friday afternoon I was listening to the station that old people like me sort of listen to, 774, and Virginia Trioli's on.

Now of course on Friday there was only one story and it was Chappelle Corby. But what surprised me with the talkback radio that ensured during that late afternoon show was the amount of people who rang in, mainly guys, who said that the only reason this story's getting such a run is that because he's a good looking white Aussie girl and a beautician.

And that there's almost 160 Australians in jail overseas at this particular moment. Now whether you accept that particular view or not is not really here nor there. But it was interesting that that perception was there very, very strongly and was reflected in many calls that afternoon.

I shall never forget a statement that I think is so close to the money on this particular question of looks and its obsession in our current context when the professor of education, Alan Bloom, in a brilliant book many years ago, *The Closing of the American Mind*, said this, everybody knows what the perfect body looks like.

[7 : 14] Everybody knows what the perfect body looks like. But nobody knows what the perfect soul is anymore. And yet in reality, when it comes to life, work, marriage and all the issues that really are important in life, it's ultimately character and the quality of who we are as men and women that really ultimately counts in the end.

Well, we come to our story tonight from the book of Samuel and the main character David is ironically described as cute and gorgeous, to use our language. The Bible describes him as ruddy, of fine appearance and of handsome features.

He's a young man at the prime of his life, probably in his late teens at this particular point of the story. And as we come to 1 Samuel chapter 16, the preceding chapters tell us that Saul has been put in as king of Israel.

The people of Israel wanted a king like other nations. God was certainly reluctant to go down that particular path because Israel was a theocracy under God and led through the voice of the prophet Samuel who had the voice of God and the word of God and would speak it out to the people to give direction to the nation.

But in the end, God chose Saul to be king and he was a mighty warrior, a huge mountain of a man and yet sadly and tragically he became arrogant, full of himself and through disobedience he ultimately forfeited his right to be king and ultimately Samuel the prophet comes to him and says, God has rejected you as king because you have failed to obey me.

[8 : 59] To obey is better than sacrifice was the words we read in chapter 15. As the film clip showed us, the prophet Samuel goes to Bethlehem to Jesse's family and one by one Jesse brings out his sons who he thinks are going to be the ones to be called king.

When they came, he looked at Eliab and thought, surely the Lord's anointed is now before the Lord. The oldest son, the most logical one to be brought forth and you would think he would be the one.

Eliab, the oldest, the biggest, the strongest, the tallest. And in that particular culture we would not be surprised that that would be God's choice.

This is the ancient world. The oldest son has privileges and yet time and time and time again in the Old Testament we see God overturning this law of primogenita.

Cain is rejected and Abel is chosen. Gideon is chosen. He is the youngest and the least. Judah is chosen. He's not the oldest of the brothers and in this case David will ultimately be chosen and not the oldest because in the end it's up to God.

[10 : 22] God chooses whom he will and so often it's the youngest and the least. The one we would not expect is the one the Lord chooses.

Samuel thinks it's going to be Eliab and then he makes this famous statement and God speaks to him and says Do not look on his appearance or the height of his stature because I have rejected him.

For the Lord does not see as mortals see. They look on the outward appearance but the Lord looks upon the heart.

When you come to the question of youth and the Bible and what God says about young people and the Bible there are really four major strands that come through.

There is a strand I mentioned before that so often God overturns that cultural law of privilege for the oldest son and chooses whom he will and ultimately he chooses one who will do his bidding.

[11 : 25] Ultimately he chooses one who will do his will. Ultimately he chooses one who has a heart after God. The first major theme is that youth is a time of promise.

For men it's when you're at your strongest. For women at your most beautiful. Youth is also a time of regret the Bible would teach us. Psalm 25 Remember not the sins of my youth or my rebellious ways.

And many of us as young men and women will look back on our time as young people and have a feeling of regret for the things that we did and the things that we were a part of.

I certainly feel that my late teens and my early 20s were times of indulgence both with drugs sexually and in so many other ways it was a very very damaging period of my life and yet the goodness of God in forgiving me and setting me free and making me new was the wonderful gift of the Gospel.

The old is gone the new has come says Paul Remember not the sins of my youth nor my rebellious ways. Of course the other beautiful theme that comes through the Bible with respect to young people and God is that youth can be a time when we set good patterns for our life and we certainly see that when Paul is speaking to the young man Timothy let them not look down on you because you are young but be an example in faith in life in love and in purity that setting patterns when we are young that set us in tone for a good life is so much the theme of youth and the Bible.

[13 : 09] What does it mean to have a heart after God because ultimately that's what interests God and that is what is so central to this particular story.

Samuel said to Jesse after he'd been through all the sons seven sons in all passing through are all your sons here and he said there remains yet the youngest but he is keeping the sheep and Samuel said to Jesse send and bring him for we will not sit down until he comes and when he came he was ruddy beautiful and handsome the Lord said rise and anoint him for this is the one the one I choose.

When the Apostle Paul is preaching in the synagogue at Pisidian Antioch in Acts chapter 13 we read these words After removing Saul God made David their king God testifies concerning David I have found David son of Jesse a man after my own heart he will do everything I want him to do and that's what it means to have a heart after God I will do everything he that is God wants me to do you see in the end it's about obedience to the living God and it was Jesus himself a descendant of David when he commences his ministry he says these words that ring out through the centuries the kingdom of God God is near repent and believe the good news you see the Christian walk begins with repentance it begins with a radical reorientation of our life to Jesus Christ our sinful nature inclines us towards self-centeredness to feathering our own nest looking after our own affairs being obsessed with what the world is obsessed with beauty looks fashion wealth creation you name it the things the world is fixated on is where our sinful nature inclines us toward all the time our inclination is to idolatry to make things that are not God into gods and to worship them and to give them our energy and to give them our focus but Jesus Christ calls men and women everywhere to repentance to reorientate toward him to turn toward him to have our commitments and our priorities focused on him and to allow

Jesus Christ through his word through his word to direct us and orientate us in the way we should go friends I call you tonight to repentance because ultimately Jesus Christ calls us to repentance for those of you who have walked the Christian life for a long time for me it's 25 years at this particular time repentance is an ongoing way of life even though Greek was something I didn't do particularly well at college and it was sort of almost about character development in the end to get through it there was certain things I did learn that that word repentance as a verb is one of those sort of ongoing indicative it sort of means you don't just do repentance once it's an ongoing way of life we are constantly needing to turn to him Paul puts it in this words I die daily brothers I die to myself I die to my own wants and desires that I might be born anew to the desires of Jesus Christ and his priorities and his commitments friends we're called to a life of obedience tonight a life orientated around Jesus Christ a life where our faith and trust and hope is placed on him where we trust

Jesus Christ to forgive us by virtue of his death on the cross and his atoning sacrifice on our behalf where he takes upon himself the sin of the world your sin my sin past present future that's the good news that Jesus Christ has won salvation for us through his death on the cross and then sisters and brothers we're called to a life of obedience as well we trust Jesus Christ as saviour but we're then to obey Jesus Christ as lord fashion is not lord beauty is not lord money is not lord self interest is not lord Jesus Christ is lord and it's him that we are to bow down to I remember many years ago in the bike scene that had become incredibly polarised and quite violent and a couple of big Sydney clubs were trying to move into Melbourne and there'd been guns and all sorts of stuff going on behind the scenes little of that got media attention but I remember our president at the time

[18 : 19] John Smith and two guys were called in by one of the heaviest clubs in Melbourne over that issue and they turned around and said whose side are you going to be on are you going to stand with us and get rid of these people coming in or what and John's response was staggering he said there's only one person in the end that God's God bows down to and it's not violence and it's not intimidation and it's not threats we are part of the church and for 2000 years we've bowed our knee to Jesus Christ and we will continue to bow our knee to Jesus Christ and we will not answer to anyone and this heavy biker turned around and said well if you're in the way when the shooting starts too bad and John's response was well we come out of a church that's faced many times of persecution and if we get persecuted we will go down as well now we were smart for the next couple of months and how we operated in the scene but in the end

Jesus Christ is Lord and that is who we bow down to both tonight and in the future as I close I also want to share the gospel promises because it's not just repentance faith and obedience Jesus Christ promises us many things if we do respond to him in repentance and faith a promise that deals with the past a promise that deals with the future and a promise that deals with the present and the ongoing and the gospel promises us those three things if we respond to Jesus Christ the first promise is that our sins will be forgiven the old is gone the new has come it's a wonderful thing to be forgiven to know the stuff that we've thought the stuff that we've done the good and just things that we have failed to do and we know that to be the case our selfishness our greed our lust our judgmental attitudes our fixation with materialism to know that we can say sorry and that we will be forgiven and that Jesus will wipe the slate clean to use the words of Whispering Jack in that song we have a chance to turn the pages over to turn that page over and begin writing afresh is the good news of the gospel your sins will be forgiven the second promise that comes if we respond to the gospel is the gift of the Holy Spirit it's interesting that sometimes the Christian life is attacked as you're weak and you need a crutch to get through life that somehow you know you can't do it on your own you bet you can't do it on your own but for me the Holy Spirit was like a rocket ship like taking off the passion the energy that came into my life when I sensed the touch and power of the Spirit has stayed with me for the last 25 years you can't live the demanding

Christian life without God's Spirit you can't follow the demands of Jesus without his power and God's Spirit provides a power remember the end of the story we had tonight when Samuel the prophet anoints David with oil the Bible says this and the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward that's how he was to conduct his kingly mission how could he avoid Saul for all those years in the wilderness as he tried to snuff him out how would he eventually rule the people of Israel in the power of the Holy Spirit the Christian life promises the gift of the Spirit and of course Paul reminds us in Ephesians 5 that we need to keep on being filled it's not just a one off be filled and be keep on being filled is the Greek tense in Ephesians 5 and then finally and I hope for most of us in this room or for all of us I should say really that the gift of eternal life is still a long way off so to speak because in the end

God promises the gift of eternal life to those of us who respond to him I think one of the reasons we as a culture are so fixated with the present so fixated with beauty so fixated with body image so fixated with what we can get now is that as a culture we have no sense of the afterlife anymore we think this is it we think this is the only life but it's not to use a football analogy it's only the home and away round the grand final is on the other side this is a prelude this is only a beginning God has promised us the gift of eternal life in Jesus Christ I want to call you now to a moment of quietness and reflection to ponder what has been said you may want to do that by closing your eyes or you may want to keep them open but I just want there to be a short moment of reflection and then I'm going to pray a prayer that you may wish to pray particularly if you have never responded to

God in repentance and by placing your faith in the finished and completed work of Jesus Christ on the cross let's have a reflective moment and I'll pray shortly please follow this prayer quietly in your heart or on your lips if you've never responded to Jesus before loving heavenly father I thank you for Jesus Christ I thank you for his life his death and his resurrection tonight I repent of my sins and I turn to you tonight I ask that you might forgive me by virtue of Jesus death on the cross and through his mighty resurrection

[24 : 47] I pray that you might give me both the gift of the Holy Spirit and the hope of eternal life in you please help me find my place in your family the church please help me find sisters and brothers who will help me grow in my newfound Christian faith help me to be passionate about your word the Bible and about living a life of obedience to you I thank you that in you my sins are forgiven the old is gone the old is gone and the new has come I thank you for your goodness to me and I pray that you'd help me from this day forward to live a life marked by obedience to Jesus Christ as Lord trust in Jesus Christ as my saviour and to have a life marked by faith hope and love in Jesus name amen if that was your prayer tonight as I said earlier please indicate that to one of your friends who might be a

keen Christian that you know I trust or perhaps Lisa as the youth minister here or to Paul or to Rod as your other pastors and ministers in this place or to anyone else you might trust and I want to encourage you to get into a Bible study group or a small group ASAP because that's what I did when I was 20 years of age and got really strongly established in my faith early and it was a great beginning to what has been a 25 year passionate following of Jesus and I hope that God gives me lots and lots more time to keep living it out