

What You Need to Know About SAUL:

“The King with the Unsundered Will and the Unrepentant Heart”

Study Number Six – 1 Samuel 15:1-35

We're at episode number 6 in the life of Saul. This is where things really start to fall apart.

Saul never really deals with the disobedience in his life. He never really deals with the problem that has been plaguing him. That is, he's got a proud heart.

Other men in the scripture make mistakes. And that's one thing about the men in the scriptures, they're never painted as saints but they're pictured as people, real people who have problems.

Abraham lied to Abimelech and told him that his wife was his sister.

Moses disobeyed God's command by striking the rock instead of speaking to it as the Lord had specifically instructed.

And in Saul's case we found a complete psychological breakdown basically. And the one thing that is absent from his life, he never confesses, he never repents or becomes

crushed and broken in spirit.

In our day, for the most part, people never really deal with the disobedience in their lives. It's so easy to slip in and out of circumstances and blame everybody else for it and never really own up to it.

Confession and repentance are a vital part of a relationship with the Lord.

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

In 2 Timothy 4 Paul describes the last days as being days whose people have consciences that are seared with a hot iron. That means they're seared to the point where they're beyond feeling. They've become hardened and insensitive.

And it's always easier the next time to slip in and out of it, after we've condoned it one time, to do it again and again and again.

Saul is in this situation. We have seen him now in five episodes:

In the first episode he was on his way, looking for some of his dad's donkeys and ended up meeting Samuel.

In the second he became the king of the land as he was anointed by Samuel.

In the third we saw him battle the Ammonites and lead to a great victory. And he said the Lord is the one who did this.

In episode number four we saw him at Gilgal. He couldn't wait the seven days that had been stipulated by Samuel to offer the sacrifice. On the seventh day he went in, in direct disobedience, and did what he wasn't supposed to do.

In our last study we saw him take all the credit for Jonathan, his son's, victory in battle. And Saul actually wanted to take Jonathan's life at the end because he had been disobedient in taking some of the honey that was provided. He didn't know that he was making a mistake and that his dad told them they couldn't eat before all this had taken place.

We find in our life a principle that's always there and that is if we don't learn the lesson the first time, we're going to get a second chance to learn it.

And then if we don't learn it a second time, we'll probably get a third one, and a fourth and a fifth. And with Saul he's getting a second shot here. He's getting another opportunity to act as a king. He's getting another chance to demonstrate that he is God's man and he should be the king.

There are some other principles that come out of our study. A lot of times we're shocked at how people all of a sudden just

crater and their lives explode and they fall apart.

The neat thing about studying the biographies of these men is we can walk right with them and watch them making the mistakes. And then as they make them, the time finally comes when the crisis is here and they've made enough mistakes, they're totally unprepared for the crisis, and so everything falls apart.

One writer says this:

Remember the fall of Saul? it didn't happen in one cataclysmic tumble—one dam-burst deluge. It wasn't as if one morning over his oatmeal Saul decided that he would reject God and rebel against His prophets. Sin didn't destroy Saul in a flash flood—it ate him away by erosion. It wasn't a sudden house fire, it was more like termites. Maintaining his kingly exterior, Saul went empty inside. One sin led to another sin, one lie to another lie, one jealousy to another, one disobedience to another. Finally, there wasn't much left for the Philistines to conquer.

But then, you say, the fall of David must have been different. With Saul it was like a slow rust but with David it must have been like an instant crash. Like a falling star. After all, wasn't he the man after God's own heart? He must have taken his eyes off the road a minute, then—boom—he was in the ditch.

It didn't happen that way. No one falls "suddenly." Not even David. Remember this: David's great sin did not happen in one impetuous, impulsive, momentous outburst of passion.

David, like Saul, fell because of unjudged sin that finally caught up to blur his vision at a crucial moment.
(source unknown)

And so what we're saying is take heed. Take heed lest we fall. Watch him. To this point Saul has not been willing to accept the responsibility for his prior disobediences. And because of that, we're at a major turning point in his life in this chapter. And when it all falls apart, it's a very subtle process.

Now we're going to be a little shocked at the fact that the Lord is going to deal with the Amalekites so severely.

We have to remember two things about the Amalekites:

1. The Amalekites were the group of people who tried to stop the children of Israel from going up to the promised land.
2. They attack the women and the children as they were under Moses' leadership going from Egypt up to the land.

And the Lord said back in the book of Deuteronomy that He was going to wail on their tail at some future day. Well, here is the time.

In Deuteronomy 25, when Moses is preaching his farewell sermon, he says:

Deuteronomy 25:17-19

Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way. When you came out of Egypt; How he met thee by the way and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when you were faint and weary; And he feared not God. Therefore it shall be, when the Lord thy God has given you rest from all of your enemies round about, in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it, that you shall blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shall not forget it.

Well, if this had been done on this occasion, we would have solved another major crisis for the children of Israel.

In the book of Esther, Haman had designs on destroying the Jewish race. And it's only because of Esther's relationship with the king and her courageous attitude to go into his presence and intercede on the part of the Jewish race, that they were not exterminated. Haman was an Amalekite. He too, if he had his way, would have destroyed the Lord's seed.

So the Amalekites are the guys in the black hats. Okay, they're not the good guys at all in this situation.

Alright, now as the days of our lives continue, we're going to look at the sixth saga of our story. Let's pick up at verse 1.

v. 1 Samuel said to Saul, "I am the one the Lord sent to anoint you king over his people Israel; so listen now to the message from the Lord.

“Samuel said to Saul, ‘I am the one the Lord sent to anoint you king over his people Israel; so listen now to the message from the Lord.’”

When we read that, does it sound like there is a tad bit of strain in the relationship between Samuel and Saul? Somebody’s pulling rank.

It’s kind of like, “Listen buster. You know you are too big for your britches and you’ve got to remember who buttered your bread. You’ve got to remember who started this whole thing out in the beginning.”

We feel the tension of it behind the scenes. Because he’s been under the strain of Saul’s disobedience, he’s had to live with stern remarks to get the attention of the stubborn character. And he’s had to be a victim of his selfishness.

Saul has wanted to be first, last and everything in between through the whole thing. And when living around somebody like that, it’s tough to be submissive to them.

The roles are reversed and we get the feeling here in this first verse that he’s been taken for granted. That he’s been forgotten in the process.

He has been operating as king as though Samuel didn’t exist, because he doesn’t have any religious designs at all. And Samuel of course represents the religious things. And he’s been operating that way.

“listen now to the message from the Lord.”

v. 2 This is what the Lord Almighty says: ‘I will punish the Amalekites for what they did to Israel when they waylaid them as they came up from Egypt.

“This is what the Lord Almighty says: “I will punish the Amalekites for what they did to Israel when they waylaid them as they came up from Egypt.”

Isn't it interesting, people get the idea that they're getting away with disobedience in their lives. It's so easy to think we can just rock along and everything's going to be great and we can excuse it.

But all of a sudden, the axe falls. And here's the Lord. The Amalekites have been living for a long time and thought they got away with all this stuff that was given by Moses. And now here several hundred years later, the Lord has the memory of an elephant. It's time to deal with the Amalekites.

There's another interesting phrase in the Bible. When it speaks in the time of Abraham it says, “The iniquity of the Amorite is not yet full.”

What does that mean? That means it isn't God's time for the Amorites yet. He recognizes their disobedience, but it isn't full yet for the wrath of God.

The United States is on a time schedule. We aren't getting away with what we're doing. Economically we're doing good and all this stuff is happening and we're in a time of scientific technology like we can't believe, and new comforting things happening to us, and we're rocking along and thinking it's going to be like this all the time.

But one of these days we're going to wake up and the axe of God's judgment is going to fall.

Hebrews 10:31

It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

We need to make sure that our heart is right with the Lord in these things, because the time is coming. And here it is time for the wrath of God to take over against the Amalekites.

v. 3 Now go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy everything that belongs to them. Do not spare them; put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys.”

“Now go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy everything that belongs to them. Do not spare them;”

Notice the specific instructions. The only reason these additional instructions are here is this guy has a hard time following instructions. So the job description is incredibly specific. Usually the Lord doesn't go into quite so much detail,

but He's dealing with a guy who's getting his last chance to be obedient. And he doesn't have a very good record to this point.

He says:

“Do not spare them; put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys.””

The day of grace has run out. Go do it.

And in this situation now the time had come.

Why didn't Saul like Samuel? Maybe because he reminds him of God. He doesn't want to know what's wrong.

There are people like that who won't go to a doctor. It reminds them of how bad they feel and they really don't want to know what's wrong with them so they don't go. And naturally we don't want to know what's going to happen, don't mess around with Samuel. Just leave him at a distance.

And now the message comes and it's incredibly specific at this point.

It almost looks like it's going to be great, doesn't it? It's kind of like a set-up for a big blow out here because when we look at verse 1, we think, “Oh boy, he's going to do it. He's going to pull this thing off.”

v. 4 So Saul summoned the men and mustered them at Telaim—two hundred thousand foot soldiers and ten thousand men from Judah.

“So Saul summoned the men and mustered them at Telaim—two hundred thousand foot soldiers and ten thousand men from Judah.”

He's got two hundred and ten thousand soldiers ready to go to battle. That's plenty to do the job. Exceeding abundant above all that he could ask or think or want or need. Other battles have been fought with a lot less.

v. 5 Saul went to the city of Amalek and set an ambush in the ravine.

“Saul went to the city of Amalek and set an ambush in the ravine.”

Now he organizes it. He's a military genius. And he does something nice in verse 6.

v. 6 Then he said to the Kenites, “Go away, leave the Amalekites so that I do not destroy you along with them; for you showed kindness to all the Israelites when they came up out of Egypt.” So the Kenites moved away from the Amalekites.

“Then he said to the Kenites, ‘Go away, leave the Amalekites so that I do not destroy you along with them; for you showed

kindness to all the Israelites when they came up out of Egypt.’
So the Kenites moved away from the Amalekites.”

That’s an act of mercy and kindness.

They treated the children of Israel with kindness when they came out of Egypt. They weren’t like the Amalekites and so the Lord remembers their kindness here at this point.

v. 7 Then Saul attacked the Amalekites all the way from Havilah to Shur, to the east of Egypt.

“Then Saul attacked the Amalekites all the way from Havilah to Shur, to the east of Egypt.”

And so many are thinking, “Wow! He’s doing exactly what he’s supposed to do. He’s a good guy.”

Isn’t this amazing how relevant this is? Situation ethics here. If the situation demands it, it’s alright to be disobedient. That’s what everybody says.

v. 8 He took Agag king of the Amalekites alive, and all his people he totally destroyed with the sword.

“He took Agag king of the Amalekites alive, and all his people he totally destroyed with the sword.”

Now he thought, “Well it’s a shame you know to kill the king. I mean I’ve got to have something to show that I’ve done the

job. We'll just bring old Agag back with us. He's a nice guy."

And just a tiny bit of disobedience.

In the Bible there are tremendous illustrations of what just a tiny little bit of disobedience does. Remember when Achan went into the city of Jericho and he stole those few things and buried them in the floor of his tent? That affected the whole nation in its battle against Ai. They got whipped in the next battle.

Here this is just a small thing but it's to minister to his personal pride. He's sparing the king and it's sort of like bringing home the royal prey. And it's, "Bring back the king so I can show you I did my job! I really mopped up." But underneath we know that it's ministering to his personal pride.

v. 9 But Saul and the army spared Agag and the best of the sheep and cattle, the fat calves and lambs—everything that was good. These they were unwilling to destroy completely, but everything that was despised and weak they totally destroyed.

"But Saul and the army spared Agag and"—here comes the rest of the statistics.

"the best of the sheep and cattle, the fat calves and the lambs—everything that was good."

Wow, that's neat. No, it's not neat.

“These they were unwilling to destroy completely, but everything that was despised and weak they totally destroyed.”

Why did he do that? His popularity probably began slipping in the polls a little. People were beginning to realize that he was really not God's man. And his walking with God is to cover his proud heart at this point.

v. 10 Then the word of the Lord came to Samuel:

“Then the word of the Lord came to Samuel:”

What's that tell us? The Lord's witnessing that whole thing. He isn't getting away with anything.

Hebrews 4:13

All things are naked and open unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

And the Lord's witnessing all of this. And just as soon as it happens, the Lord starts to set in motion the things that are going to confront Saul with his disobedience.

v. 11 “I am grieved that I have made Saul king, because he has turned away from me and has not carried out my instructions.” Samuel was troubled, and he

cried out to the Lord all that night.

“I am grieved that I have made Saul king, because he has turned away from me and has not carried out my instructions. Samuel was troubled, and he cried out to the Lord all that night.”

Genesis 6:5

God saw that the wickedness of man was great upon the earth and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually and it grieved the Lord that He had made man.

The Lord is “grieved.” He’s grieved for TWO REASONS:

1. “he has turned away from me” and
2. “he...has not carried out my instructions.”

Can we stop here for a second? If God chose to evaluate our life, what would the two statements be? And would they be similar when we’re really honest with Him up to this point? Have we turned away from Him? Have we followed His instruction? Or would He have to say, “You are like Laodicea. You are lukewarm, neither cold nor hot. You make me sick.” (Revelation 3)

Just as Saul and Samuel have developed this distance in their relationship, now there’s a real reason for it. We can

understand why Saul and Samuel don't get close because they're not alike.

In this situation he's turned away. He's not carried out His instruction.

Isn't it interesting that the horizontal relationship affects the vertical relationship? The reason these two guys are not one heart and one spirit is not because Samuel doesn't love Saul—he does. We're going to see him weep here over this whole thing. He really cares about him. But they could not be one heart in the things of the Lord.

That's why when we marry, we need to find somebody who's one heart with us on the things of the Lord. “Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers as the manner of some is.” (ref. 2 Corinthians 6:14) It creates tension and strife.

And Saul and Samuel in the horizontal relationship only demonstrate the fact that there's something wrong in the vertical relationship. He doesn't care.

Well, it's heartbreaking to see this. And yet Samuel has to go along with what's taken place. What a neat guy.

v. 12 Early in the morning Samuel got up and went to meet Saul, but he was told, “Saul has gone to Carmel. There he has set up a monument in his own honor and has turned and gone on down to Gilgal.”

“Early in the morning Samuel got up and went to meet Saul, but he was told, ‘Saul has gone to Carmel. There he has set up a monument in his own honor and has turned and gone on down to Gilgal.’”

Look at the guy. As soon as he hears this it says he “was troubled and he cried out to the Lord all night.” He was so hurt! He went through all of this great experience of anointing this guy king, saw the potential in his life and he loved him. But it’s been heartbreaking.

It’s just like the Lord said, “if it be possible, let this cup pass from me,” “Nevertheless, not my will, but Yours be done,” “speak Lord for thy servant hearth.” That’s always been Samuel’s attitude. And here and now, having prayed all night, he gets up early in the morning and he’s ready to go and try to find Saul.

Then he goes to find him. What’s the guy doing? He’s off on Mount Carmel putting up a monument to himself.

Some people live for monuments. They’ve got to leave their stained-glass windows, organs and their big buildings behind with their name on it. It’s a monument to their memory, the fact that they’ve been here.

This monument in the Hebrew text is in the shape of a fist. It speaks of human power and human energy, as if it is not relevant to the day in which we live. And the Hebrew depicts this moment put there. And it sure does epitomize the life of

our king Saul.

Gideon did the same thing. He took some gold and he made a religious ephod and the people started worshipping the ephod. It was a mark of his victory that he had won.

v. 13 When Samuel reached him, Saul said, “The Lord bless you! I have carried out the Lord’s instructions.”

“When Samuel reached him,”

“When Samuel reached him, Saul said, ‘The Lord bless you! I have carried out the Lord’s instructions.’”

Wow! Isn’t that just great? What does that tell us? That tells us that pride can blind and it really can blur the mind and also causes us to forget the specific commands that were given.

There will be a lot of people who are going to meet the Lord in the same way.

Matthew 7:22, 23

Many will say unto the Lord in that day, haven’t we done many wonderful works? And I’ll say, “Depart from Me, I never knew you.”

They never came to a relationship. They were reminded all

the time. They were listening to it, never interacting with it personally. And here in this situation he sounds so hypocritical.

“The Lord bless you! I have carried out the Lord’s instructions.”

Just like, “I’m the good guy!”

v. 14 But Samuel said, “What then is this bleating of sheep in my ears? What is this lowing of cattle that I hear?”

“But Samuel said, ‘What then is this bleating of sheep in my ears? What is this lowing of cattle that I hear?’”

Nathan the prophet walks into David and tells him a parable and then he points his finger right at him and he says, “You are the man.”

And it’s just like Samuel knows how to put his finger on exactly the disobedience.

“What is this ‘baaah’ I hear in the background? Or the ‘moooo’? Y’all didn’t leave with any livestock when you went on this safari. What are you doing with all this stuff?”

Now the time comes. Here comes the answer.

v. 15 Saul answered, “The soldiers brought them from

the Amalekites; they spared the best of the sheep and cattle to sacrifice to the Lord your God, but we totally destroyed the rest.”

“Saul answered, ‘The soldiers brought them from the Amalekites; they spared the best of the sheep and cattle to sacrifice to the Lord your God, but we totally destroyed the rest.’”

That’s like when the Dallas Cowboys are winning. It’s “we are winning.” And when they lose, “they lost.”

“They did it!” but “we totally destroyed the rest.”

We can just see the play on words—blame.

The blessing is they saved it so we could sacrifice these animals to “the Lord your God.” He never says “my” or “ours.” It’s always “yours.”

v. 16 “Stop!” Samuel said to Saul. “Let me tell you what the Lord said to me last night.” “Tell me,” Saul replied.

“‘Stop!’ Samuel said to Saul. ‘Let me tell you what the Lord said to me last night.’”

Well, he says, “I’ve had about all the drivel I’m going to take. Shut up.”

“Stop!” Become guilty.

“Let me tell you what the Lord said last night.”

That’s scary when we think of the judgment seat of Christ, isn’t it? Walking in there with all kinds of excuses why we did such a lousy job. And the Lord just says, “Shut up and sit down and let Me tell you what I’m going to tell you. Here is the message from the Lord.”

“‘Tell me,’ Saul replied.”

v. 17 Samuel said, “Although you were once small in your own eyes, did you not become the head of the tribes of Israel? The Lord anointed you king over Israel.

“Samuel said, ‘Although you were once small in your own eyes, did you not become the head of the tribes of Israel? The Lord anointed you king over Israel.’”

“Saul, the Lord did all of this and the reason you’re in trouble is because of the big ‘I’ in your life. You were once small in your own eyes and now you’ve gotten a big head. Pride has usurped the throne of your heart.”

v. 18 And he sent you on a mission, saying, ‘Go and completely destroy those wicked people, the Amalekites; make war on them until you have wiped them out.’

“And he sent you on a mission, saying, “Go and completely destroy those wicked people, the Amalekites; make war on them until you have wiped them out.””

Repetition of job description so that justice can prevail.

“Is that the way you understood it Saul?”

v. 19 Why did you not obey the Lord? Why did you pounce on the plunder and do evil in the eyes of the Lord?”

“Why did you not obey the Lord?”

BAM! Big question.

“Why did you pounce on the plunder and do evil in the eyes of the Lord?”

Two big questions:

1. “Why didn’t you obey the Lord?”— obedience.

“Why did you disobey?”

2. “Why did you pounce on the plunder?”—covetous heart.

“Why did you do that?”

v. 20 “But I did obey the Lord,” Saul said. “I went on the mission the Lord assigned me. I completely destroyed the Amalekites and brought back Agag their king.

“‘But I did obey the Lord,’ Saul said. ‘I went on the mission the Lord assigned me. I completely destroyed the Amalekites and brought back Agag their king.’”

Isn't that incredible? He seeks to justify himself. He goes to court. What is wrong with this? As long as we're trying to justify ourselves, as long as we're trying to defend ourselves, we'll never become crushed in spirit or broken.

We can always tell the person who throws up the white flag and really surrenders and admits this thing and is broken and crushed and turns from it. This is the person who has truly repented. And he's justifying himself.

v. 21 The soldiers took sheep and cattle from the plunder, the best of what was devoted to God, in order to sacrifice them to the Lord your God at Gilgal.”

“The soldiers took the sheep and cattle from the plunder, the best of what was devoted to God, in order to sacrifice them to the Lord your God at Gilgal.”

Again, “the Lord YOUR God.”

Not “OUR God” or “MY God.”

v. 22 But Samuel replied: “Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams.

“But Samuel replied: ‘Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams.’”

If there’s one verse out of the whole life of king Saul that we want to remember, mark that one and memorize it. That is a critical verse.

All of these questions are just spilling out one right after another to reveal the man’s heart.

“Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings as much as he does in obeying the voice which He’s spoken?”

And he answers his own question:

“To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams.”

Doing what the Lord says is far more important than any sacrifice or service that we can perform.

When we find people so concerned about giving their money and about sacrificing their best interest for activity to impress, watch out. Because it's somebody trying to cover a proud, unbroken heart and will do so by a whole lot of activity. And Saul is doing exactly that.

If we were to look at one top priority in our life, OBEDIENCE, what does the Lord say?

Nothing delights the heart of God any more than the obedient heart moving in the direction of His perfect will.

Watchman Nee wrote a book called *Spiritual Authority* and this is what he says:

(Spiritual Authority by Watchman Nee)

... as man's obedience increases, his action decrease. When we first begin to follow the Lord we are full of activity, but quite short on obedience. But as we advance in spirituality our actions gradually diminish until we are filled with obedience. Many, however, do what they like and refuse to do what they dislike. They never ponder whether they are acting out of obedience. Hence, many works are done out of self and not in obedience to the Lord.
(source unknown)

Disobedience, even though it's forgiven, marks and hardens the life, does damage to the life, brings about hurt. Saul has

increasingly become insensitive to the Lord and to people around him. He's become hardened and proud.

v. 23 For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has rejected you as king.”

“For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has rejected you as king.”

TWO THINGS:

1. “rebellion” and
2. “arrogance.”

“rebellion is like the sin of divination”—and we’re going to see that in the last episode when Saul goes to the witch at Endor.

And finally, “arrogance”—He has “rejected the word of the Lord.”

And as a result, he is rejected as king.

v. 24 Then Saul said to Samuel, “I have sinned. I violated the Lord’s command and your instructions. I was afraid of the people and so I gave in to them.

“Then Saul said to Samuel, ‘I have sinned. I violated the Lord’s command and your instructions. I was afraid of the people and so I gave in to them.’”

And some are saying, “You read that wrong because I’m reading that from the guy’s heart. He’s really busted up in spirit.”

Oh, is he?

There are several reasons why we read it that way. He is trying to slip in and out of the thing without really owning up to it. It’s easy. “Oh I sinned!” “Lord, please forgive me all my sins tonight, in Jesus’ name. Amen.” Crawl into bed.

One of the hardest things in raising kids is getting them to admit what they did wrong. It’s always good to make them say it. As long as they are rebellious, they might say, “You know what I did. You know what I did.”

“I want to hear you say it. What did you do?”

“You know what I did.”

“We’re getting ready to wail on your tail if you’re not going to admit what you did.”

And it is so hard to say, “I lied” or “I stole” or “I cheated” or “I did that.” And God expects us to be very specific with a broken spirit.

Saul was saying, “Boy it’s getting serious! Getting crowded! I sinned! Okay! I did it!”

“I violated the Lord’s command and your instructions. I was afraid of the people and so I gave in to them.” Brings the people into it again.

2 Timothy 2:15

Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, gladly dividing the word of truth.

He didn’t do that. He let it happen. That’s what’s so sad about weak leadership. It’s an indication of the fact that we’re out of fellowship if there’s no strength.

He just sits around and lets it happen. So now he’s got a reason for blaming everybody else for it.

Ecclesiastes describes it by saying:

Ecclesiastes 4:5

A fool folds his hands and ruins himself.

Just no will or no drive, just wanted to please everybody so he just lets it happen.

v. 25 Now I beg you, forgive my sin and come back with

me, so that I may worship the Lord.”

“Now I beg you, forgive my sin and come back with me, so that I may worship the Lord.”

“forgive”— worship without dealing with the consequences. “Just forgive me quickly and let’s get on with it.” And that is so different from David.

David committed adultery in 2 Samuel 11 and then murder in the same chapter, because he tried to cover what he did in the other. When Nathan comes in and deals with him, David falls crushed and broken in spirit. And he says:

Psalm 51:10-12

Against thee and thee only have I sinned. Create in me a clean heart, Oh God, and renew a right spirit within me. Restore unto the joy of my salvation.

Why was he a man after God’s own heart? When he sinned, he really sought God’s face for forgiveness, for cleansing.

Saul is so flippant about it. And we’re living in the day of Saul’s running around the place. “Well, I can go ahead and do it and dial 1 John 1:9, ‘if I confess my sins and he is faithful and just to forgive sins, and purify us from all unrighteousness.’” And off he goes, without ever really facing up to the horrible consequences of what has been done.

Saul looked upon his sin as chiefly offending Samuel and not the Lord. And so he's asking Samuel to forgive him. He doesn't have a sense of relationship to God and what he's doing.

A confession is a striking illustration of Jeremiah 17:9:

Jeremiah 17:9

The heart is deceitful above things and desperately wicked who can know it.

Who are we to judge Saul? We do have some real good reasons for feeling why because of what we've seen.

He's pleading with Samuel to do something about it.

Remember the parable of the rich man and Lazarus? When they both die, and the rich man is in torment and he says, "Oh please, get some water for me and slake my thirst. And then please go tell my brothers." And what does Abraham say? "No. No."

The minute we die we have no opportunity for further requests. It's over. We don't get a stay of execution. When the day of grace runs out, it is judgment.

Saul isn't going to get any reprieve. He's had plenty of opportunities. The time comes for the axe to fall and he's covering up his sin. He's not owning up to it.

v. 26 But Samuel said to him, “I will not go back with you. You have rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord has rejected you as king over Israel!”

“But Samuel said to him, ‘I will not go back with you. You have rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord has rejected you as king over Israel!’”

John 12:48

There is a judge for the one who rejects Me and does not accept My word. That very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day.

“Saul, it’s too late. The day is here. The disobedience is going to be dealt with. God’s judgment is irreversible. The divine sentence is to be carried out in this situation. You’ve waited too long.”

v. 27 As Samuel turned to leave, Saul caught hold of the edge of his robe, and it tore.

“As Samuel turned to leave, Saul caught hold of the edge of his robe, and it tore.”

Remember in the New Testament that lady who had this issue of blood for so long? She reached out in faith and she just touched the hem of the garment of our Lord and her body was healed.

Wouldn't it have been wonderful if Saul would have at some time reached out and just touched the hem of his garment? If he'd just been willing to be humble and broken?

2 Corinthians 6:2

Behold now is the accepted time. Behold now is the day of salvation.

The tragedy of Saul here is he waited too long to get serious and get his act together. Just like Agrippa, “Almost you persuade me to become a Christian. But just hold off for a little while. I’ve got plenty of time to put this thing together.” (ref. Acts 26:28)

v. 28 Samuel said to him, “The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to one of your neighbors—to one better than you.

“Samuel said to him, ‘The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to one of your neighbors—to one better than you.’”

Now “one better than you” is David, a man after God’s own heart.

v. 29 He who is the Glory of Israel does not lie or change his mind; for he is not a man, that he should change his mind.”

“He who is the Glory of Israel does not lie or change his mind; for he is not a man, that he should change his mind.”

Numbers 23:19

God is not a man that He should lie, nor the son of man that He should change His mind. Does He speak and then not act, does He promise and not fulfill?

v. 30 Saul replied, “I have sinned. But please honor me before the elders of my people and before Israel; come back with me, so that I may worship the Lord your God.”

“Saul replied,”—look at the “I’s” in this verse.

“Saul replied, ‘I have sinned. But please honor me before the elders of my people and before Israel; come back with me, so that I may worship the Lord your God.’”

“I wanted you to honor me before whose people? Way back at the beginning it was the Lord’s people and you never, ever put yourself in the position that you are possessing the flock. They belong to the Lord. You’re the shepherd of the sheep, but they’re not your people. They’re the Lord’s people.”

And he says, “honor me.”

“I’ve sinned, yes, but, please honor me. It’s how I look before the leaders and the elders and all of the people of Israel; come

back with me, so I may worship the Lord your God.”

v. 31 So Samuel went back with Saul, and Saul worshiped the Lord.

“So Samuel went back with Saul, and Saul worshiped the Lord.”

But it doesn't say that Samuel worshiped with him. He just let Saul do his own thing.

He gives in, will only go with him, but he can't violate the message.

v. 32 Then Samuel said, “Bring me Agag king of the Amalekites.” Agag came to him confidently, thinking, “Surely the bitterness of death is past.”

“Then Samuel said, ‘Bring me Agag king of the Amalekites.’ Agag came to him confidently, thinking, ‘Surely the bitterness of death is past.’”

Okay now, why isn't it real? If Saul was serious, he would have grabbed a sword and killed Agag because he's disobedient. And he would have issued a command to do away with all the animals.

When we are honest about what's going on in our life, and we deal with it, we do it. We don't just sit around talking about it and making a lot of little pious statements or raising our hand

or going down the aisle or getting baptized or doing something. We take action.

Said of the Prodigal Son, “He came to his senses in the pig pen,”—but he’s still in the pig pen till he arises and goes to his father. It’s a decision.

Saul’s waiting for him. If he has sinned, pick up a sword and get rid of Agag and take care of the rest of the animals and exercise leadership.

There’s a principle:

We have to deal with the negative in our life before we can have a positive experience.

Psalm 139:23, 24

Search me, O God and know my heart
Try me and know my thoughts...

In 1 Corinthians 11 Paul says if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. (ref. 1 Corinthians 11:31)

v. 33 But Samuel said, “As your sword has made women childless, so will your mother be childless among women.” And Samuel put Agag to death before the Lord at Gilgal.

“But Samuel said, ‘As your sword has made women childless,

so will your mother be childless among women.’ And Samuel put Agag to death before the Lord at Gilgal.”

False worship always compromises and condones. The Lord in the Sermon on the Mount says, “If you have something against your brother when you come to the altar, go get right with your brother and then come and worship.” (see Matthew 5-7)

That’s the principle:

Matthew 5:29

If your right eye offends you, gouge it out. It’s better to go into heaven with one eye than into hell with two. Or if your right arm offends you, cut it off.

Take action with regard to the disobedience because God is the one who is looking.

1 Chronicles 16:9

The eyes of the Lord are running to and fro throughout the whole earth to show himself strong in the behalf of those whose hearts are perfect before Him.

The Lord looks on the heart and knows the heart.

v. 34 Then Samuel left for Ramah, but Saul went up to his home in Gibeah of Saul.

“Then Samuel left for Ramah, but Saul went up to his home in Gibeah of Saul.”

And that last verse is kind of a tear-jerker, isn't it?

v. 35 Until the day Samuel died, he did not go to see Saul again, though Samuel mourned for him. And the Lord was grieved that he had made Saul king over Israel.

“Until the day Samuel died, he did not go to see Saul again, though Samuel mourned for him. And the Lord was grieved that he had made Saul king over Israel.”

This is a lesson of a man who would not allow his passions, his feelings, his pride to be broken and to be brought under restraint.

What are the lessons we got out of it?

Lesson #1: The obedient heart is what the Lord desires in His children.

Lesson #2: God's justice and judgment is consistent with His love.

Lesson #3: Saul never says, “my God.”

He never has a personal relationship with God. It's always

“your God” but never “our God” or “my God.”

Lesson #4: Saul is concerned about his own honor, by the monument that he builds and the act of repentance that he performs.

The monument and repentance both reveal this.

Lesson #5: Obedience is better than sacrifice.

God doesn't want our sacrifices. God wants obedience.

Lesson #6: When God acts, you don't change it.

The decision is made, judgment comes.

Lesson #7: There comes a time when grace runs out and judgment takes over.

Lord, we bow before You. This has been a sober lesson. And yet we need to see these things. We knew it was coming. It helped a little but it doesn't help when we care about someone to see their lives fall apart. For Samuel it's been a very painful portrayal of a man who would never let God be God in his life. We pray You'd help us each to be sensitive to that still small voice. May we with the Psalmist David say, “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight, Oh Lord, our strength and our Redeemer.” Thank You for the special privilege of once again sitting around Your word and studying the life of this king. In Jesus' name we

pray. Amen.

What You Need to Know About SAUL:

“The King with the Unsundered Will and the Unrepentant Heart”

Study Number Six – 1 Samuel 15:1-35

NOTES

v. 1 Samuel said to Saul, “I am the one the Lord sent to anoint you king over his people Israel; so listen now to the message from the Lord.

v. 2 This is what the Lord Almighty says: ‘I will punish the Amalekites for what they did to Israel when they waylaid them as they came up from Egypt.

v. 3 Now go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy everything that belongs to them. Do not spare them; put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys.”

v. 4 So Saul summoned the men and mustered them at Telaim—two hundred thousand foot soldiers and ten thousand men from Judah.

v. 5 Saul went to the city of Amalek and set an ambush in the ravine.

v. 6 Then he said to the Kenites, “Go away, leave the Amalekites so that I do not destroy you along with them; for you showed kindness to all the Israelites when they came up out of Egypt.” So the Kenites moved away from the Amalekites.

v. 7 Then Saul attacked the Amalekites all the way from Havilah to Shur, to the east of Egypt.

v. 8 He took Agag king of the Amalekites alive, and all his people he totally destroyed with the sword.

v. 9 But Saul and the army spared Agag and the best of the sheep and cattle, the fat calves and lambs—everything that was good. These they were unwilling to destroy completely, but everything that was despised and weak they totally destroyed.

v. 10 Then the word of the Lord came to Samuel:

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v. 11 “I am grieved that I have made Saul king, because he has turned away from me and has not carried out my instructions.”

Samuel was troubled, and he cried out to the Lord all that night.

v. 12 Early in the morning Samuel got up and went to meet Saul, but he was told, “Saul has gone to Carmel. There he has set up a monument in his own honor and has turned and gone on down to Gilgal.”

v. 13 When Samuel reached him, Saul said, “The Lord bless you! I have carried out the Lord’s instructions.”

v. 14 But Samuel said, “What then is this bleating of sheep in my ears? What is this lowing of cattle that I hear?”

v. 15 Saul answered, “The soldiers brought them from the Amalekites; they spared the best of the sheep and cattle to sacrifice to the Lord your God, but we totally destroyed the rest.”

v. 16 “Stop!” Samuel said to Saul. “Let me tell you what the Lord said to me last night.” “Tell me,” Saul replied.

v. 17 Samuel said, “Although you were once small in your own eyes, did you not become the head of the tribes of Israel? The Lord anointed you king over Israel.

v. 18 And he sent you on a mission, saying, ‘Go and completely destroy those wicked people, the Amalekites; make war on them until you have wiped them out.’

v. 19 Why did you not obey the Lord? Why did you pounce on the plunder and do evil in the eyes of the Lord?”

v. 20 “But I did obey the Lord,” Saul said. “I went on the mission the Lord assigned me. I completely destroyed the Amalekites and brought back Agag their king.

v. 21 The soldiers took sheep and cattle from the plunder, the best of what was devoted to God, in order to sacrifice them to the Lord your God at Gilgal.”

v. 22 But Samuel replied: “Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams.

v. 23 For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has rejected you as king.”

v. 24 Then Saul said to Samuel, “I have sinned. I violated the Lord’s command and your instructions. I was afraid of the people and so I gave in to them.

v. 25 Now I beg you, forgive my sin and come back with me, so that I may worship the Lord.”

NOTES

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QUESTIONS:

1. Read 1 Samuel 15:1-35 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. What are Samuel's instructions to Saul in verses 1-3?

3. How is Saul disobedient in verses 8 & 9?

4. What is the Lord's response in verse 11?

5. Describe Samuel and Saul's discussion in verses 13-16.

6. How does Samuel describe Saul's actions in verses 17-19?

7. How does Saul describe his actions in verses 20 & 21?

8. Describe the tragic results of Saul's disobedience in verses 24-35.

9. Which verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: The obedient heart is what the Lord desires in His children.

LESSON #2: God's justice and judgment is consistent with His love.

LESSON #3: Saul never says, "my God."

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