

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Let's pray...

This evening, we continue the saga of King Saul.

Over the past couple of weeks, we have seen this sad story of a man who began well.

He was privileged to be the first King of Israel

He was chosen by God

He had the anointing of the Spirit.

He demonstrated humility

And then, things started to change.

He started to fear the people instead of God

He started to be disobedient to the commands of God

He pretended to be spiritual

He refused to take accountability for his own actions

And most importantly, he refused to repent.

We have seen Saul try to fix some his mistakes – however, the problem is that he tried to fix them in the flesh.

We saw that last week with the oaths that he made, and we will see the same thing tonight.

Church, always remember that we will never be able to fix our spiritual problems with solutions of the flesh.

Turn with me to the Book of Romans 8

[Rom 8:8 NKJV] 8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

And we will see this in the example that we have in our text tonight.

[1Sa 15:1-35 NKJV] 1 Samuel also said to Saul, "The LORD sent me to anoint you king over His people, over Israel. Now therefore, heed the voice of the words of the LORD.

Although we have seen Saul drop the ball repeatedly over the last few weeks, we see the Lord sending His messenger, Samuel, to let Saul know that God is giving him one more opportunity to get it right.

God is the God of second chances and third chances and fourth chance and so on.

Why?

Because we are His children and He wants us walk wisely and sometimes He will send people in our lives as messengers to remind us.

It could be a loved one, it could be through a sermon at church, it could be a message on the radio.

However, we still have to respond to that message.

Samuel is sent to Saul to tell him – hey, God is giving you another shot, make sure you get it right this time and obey Him in everything that I am about to tell you.

2 "Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'I will punish Amalek [for] what he did to Israel, how he ambushed him on the way when he came up from Egypt.

I asked you to make a note of Amalek.

Does anyone remember where the Amalekites come from???

Who are they a descendant of???

They are descendants from Esau – and they were always trying to destroy the Israelites.

The Amalekites are a picture / shadow of the flesh.

Now, Lord tell Saul through Samuel that He was going to punish the Amalekites over something that they had done previously.

Turn with me to the book of Deuteronomy 25.

[Deu 25:17-19 NKJV] 17 "Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you were coming out of Egypt, 18

"how he met you on the way and attacked your rear ranks, all the stragglers at your rear, when you [were] tired and weary; and he did not fear God. 19 "Therefore it shall be, when the LORD your God has given you rest from your enemies all around, in the land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess [as] an inheritance, [that] you will blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. You shall not forget.

When the Israelites left Egypt, it has been estimated that there was about 2 million of them, and what the Amalekites did was instead of attacking the Israelites from the front, they would attack from the rear.

That is where all the older people and children and those that were weak were.

And like the lions always look for that straggler, the one that distances itself from the pack to attack it, that is what the Amalekites did to the Israelites.

And it just so happens that this is also the same way that the flesh works.

It exploits areas in our lives where we are weak. It goes after those who have wandered off.

3 'Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.' "

Verse three is one of those verses that some people have a problem with.

How could a God who is loving command the Israelites to wipe out an entire people???

However, we must remember that the Amalekites were so corrupt and perverse that they were already destroying themselves.

God could have destroyed them just like He destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.

But God had a special purpose in this for His special nation, Israel.

He wanted it to be a test of obedience for Saul and all of Israel.

Plus, since Amalek's sin against Israel was a military attack, God wanted to make the judgment fit the sin.

4 So Saul gathered the people together and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand foot soldiers and ten thousand men of Judah. 5 And Saul came to a city of Amalek, and lay in wait in the valley. 6 Then Saul said to the Kenites, "Go, depart, get down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them. For you showed kindness to all the children of Israel when they came up out of Egypt." So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites.

So Saul gathers a formidable army to go against the Amalekites and he warns the Kenites, who were neighbors of the Amalekites, to leave the area so that they don't get caught up in the war with the Amalekites. And they proceeded to heed Saul's warning.

Moses' father-in-law was a Kenite.

7 And Saul attacked the Amalekites, from Havilah all the way to Shur, which is east of Egypt. 8 **He also took Agag king of the Amalekites alive**, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. 9 But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all [that was] good, and **were unwilling to utterly destroy them**. But everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed.

We saw the Lord give clear instructions in verse three that they were to destroy everyone and everything they had.

And here Saul spares the life of Agag, the King of the Amalekites, the King of the flesh

The name Agag means, "I will overcome" and it is a fitting name for the flesh because the flesh does not easily give up.

The flesh wants to destroy us.

And for those of you who have read ahead and read the beginning of 2 Samuel, we find that it was an Amalekite that eventually kills Saul.

Why would Saul spare the life of Agag???

Because Saul thought that he could control him.

And some of us make the mistake where we think that we can control our flesh when the scriptures tell us that we must cut it off.

Not only do they spare the life of Agag, they also keep some of the spoils of the victory.

They killed the things that they didn't want and kept the best for themselves.

Remember, God said kill everything.

Always remember that partial obedience is still disobedience.

10 Now the word of the LORD came to Samuel, saying,
11 "I greatly regret that I have set up Saul [as] king, for he has turned back from following Me, and has not performed My commandments." And it grieved Samuel, and he cried out to the LORD all night.

Here in verse 10, when the Lord tells Samuel that He regrets setting up Saul as King, we have an example of anthropomorphism. And this is when God explains Himself in

human terms so man can have some understanding of God's heart.

Even though God is all knowing, He knew what Saul was going to do before he did it – He was still heart-broken because of it.

In chapter 13, when Saul offers up the sacrifice, look at what Samuel responds to Saul.

[1Sa 13:14 NKJV] 14 "But now your kingdom shall not continue. The LORD has sought for Himself a man after His own heart, and the LORD has commanded him [to be] commander over His people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you."

In verse 11, we also see that Samuel is grieved.

God is heartbroken and Samuel is grieved –

You see, Samuel had God's heart. It hurt God to reject Saul, and it hurt God's prophet to see him rejected.

Always remember that we are close to God's heart when the things that grieve Him grieve us, and the things that please God please us.

12 So when Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul, it was told Samuel, saying, "Saul went to Carmel, and indeed, he set up a monument for himself; and he has gone on around, passed by, and gone down to Gilgal." 13 Then Samuel went to Saul, and Saul said to him, "Blessed [are] you of the LORD! I have performed the commandment of the LORD."

Despite being disobedient to the word of God, there was not the slightest bit of shame or guilt – in fact, he is proud of himself and sets up a monument for himself.

I also had you make a note of the greeting that Saul gives Samuel.

God bless you brother – again, Saul is making the impression that he is spiritual when he has been rebellious to the word of God.

Saul probably does believe that he has been obedient to the word of God – but that is what pride does, it always leads to self-deception.

14 But Samuel said, "What then [is] this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" 15 And Saul said, "They have brought them from

the Amalekites; **for the people** spared the best of the sheep and the oxen, to sacrifice to the LORD your God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed." 16 Then Samuel said to Saul, "Be quiet! And I will tell you what the LORD said to me last night." And he said to him, "Speak on."

As Saul is proclaiming his obedience to the word of God, Samuel can here the sheep and the other animals that the Lord had instructed them to destroy.

And when Samuel discloses it to Saul, Saul responds by pointing fingers.

They have brought them from the Amalekites

for the people spared the best

And then Saul attempts to justify what they did by stating that they were going to sacrifice it to the Lord. But notice that Saul says the Lord – your God.

You see, the LORD was not Saul's God. Saul was Saul's God. The LORD was the God of Samuel, not Saul.

And in his pride, Saul removed the LORD God from the throne of his own heart.

17 So Samuel said, "When you [were] little in your own eyes, [were] you not head of the tribes of Israel? And did not the LORD anoint you king over Israel? 18 "Now the LORD sent you on a mission, and said, 'Go, and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are consumed.' 19 "Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD? Why did you swoop down

on the spoil, and do evil in the sight of the LORD?" 20

And Saul said to Samuel, "**But I have obeyed the voice**

of the LORD, and gone on the mission on which the

LORD sent me, and brought back Agag king of Amalek; I

have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. 21 "**But the**

people took of the plunder, sheep and oxen, the best of

the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to

sacrifice to the LORD your God in Gilgal."

Once again, Saul resorts to making excuses.

Don't blame me – it was the people.

I obeyed – kind of - even though he admits to bringing back

King Agag which was proof that he was disobedient to the

command of the Lord.

22 So Samuel said: "Has the LORD [as great] delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, [And] to heed than the fat of rams.

Church, anything besides obedience is just empty religion.

It has been said that one could make a thousand sacrifices unto God, work a thousand hours for God's service, or give millions of dollars to His work. But all these sacrifices mean little if there is not a surrendered heart to God, shown by simple obedience.

[Psa 51:15-17 NKJV] 15 O Lord, open my lips, And my mouth shall show forth Your praise. 16 For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give [it]; You do not delight in burnt offering. 17 The sacrifices of God [are] a

broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart--These, O God, You will not despise.

The best sacrifice we can give to God is a repentant heart and surrendering ourselves by being obedient to His word.

23 For rebellion [is as] the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness [is as] iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you from [being] king."

How is rebellion like witchcraft???

Because when we rebel against God, what we are basically saying is that "I will determine what's best for me"

24 Then Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD and your

words, **because I feared the people and obeyed their voice.** 25 "Now therefore, please pardon my sin, and return with me, that I may worship the LORD."

It appears that Saul begins to repent – however, he then starts to blame the people for his disobedience.

That is not repentance. Repentance is owning up to one's own sin.

Saul should have said, "I have sinned" I am wrong! Period!

26 But Samuel said to Saul, "**I will not return with you,** for you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel." 27

And as Samuel turned around to go away, [Saul] seized the edge of his robe, and it tore. 28 So Samuel said to him, "The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you

today, and has given it to a neighbor of yours, [who is] better than you.

There is a reason why Samuel would not return with Saul and that was that Saul had failed to truly repent.

Saul wanted to worship by offering the animals that the people had brought from the Amalekites.

However, God didn't want anything to do with those animals.

The kingdom was going to be torn away from Saul and given to David.

29 "And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor relent. For He [is] not a man, that He should relent."

The title Strength of Israel is only used this one time in all of scripture.

Being King of Israel, Saul probably thought that he was the strength of Israel – but the Lord God was the strength of Israel and Saul needed to hear it.

There was no way God was going to change His mind. This was a permanent decision.

30 Then he said, "I have sinned; [yet] honor me now, please, before the elders of my people and before Israel, and return with me, that I may worship the LORD your God." 31 So Samuel turned back after Saul, and Saul worshiped the LORD.

Here we see the depth of Saul's pride. He is more concerned with his image than his soul.

He didn't care about repenting – he just didn't want to lose his authority and power over the people.

32 Then Samuel said, "Bring Agag king of the Amalekites here to me." So Agag came to him cautiously. And Agag said, "Surely the bitterness of death is past." 33 But Samuel said, "As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women." And Samuel hacked **Agag in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal.**

Samuel sees that there is still unfinished business to take care of regarding Saul partial disobedience.

Agag still has to be cut off.

And as they bring Agag to Samuel – Agag thinks that his life may be spared.

But Samuel, in obedience to the Lord hacked Agag into pieces

He didn't do it before Saul to show him how weak and proud he was

Samuel was doing it in obedience to the command of the Lord.

34 Then Samuel went to Ramah, and Saul went up to his house at Gibeah of Saul. 35 And Samuel went no more to see Saul until the day of his death. Nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul, and the LORD regretted that He had made Saul king over Israel.

Samuel knew that it wasn't his place to see Saul. It was Saul's place to come to him in humble repentance before the LORD.

This probably would not restore the kingdom to Saul but it could restore his heart before God.

Sadly, Saul never came to see Samuel.

Interestingly, Ramah and Gibeah were less than ten miles apart, but they never saw each other again.

Now, it's going to be a while longer before Saul's kingdom is taken away from him. And the sad thing is that he still fails to repent for what he did.

Next week, God chooses a new king – David.

And we will see the differences between David and Saul.

David made mistakes, but he repented and accepted the consequences of his disobedience.

Let's pray...