

Theme: Saul was rejected as king because he feared others and did not obey God's word, and then made excuses for his sin, hoping that the rituals of worship would excuse his rebellion.

## I. The Godfather at Worship

- A. Memorable scene at end of Godfather Part 1 movie
- B. Al Pacino in church becoming godfather - worship scene
- C. Intermingled with hits he has ordered as Godfather
- D. One of the best depictions of hypocritical worship ever
- E. Today we see a similar fateful scene in Saul's life

## II. God's Difficult Command

- A. Samuel gives Saul Yahweh's command  
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. <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> 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.'" 1 Samuel 15:1-3
  - 1. Yahweh reminds Saul He appointed him as king
  - 2. Saul is under God's authority - he must obey
  - 3. God gives a very clear command - destroy all [v3]
- B. The command for holy war - devoted to destruction
  - 1. Not just random killing - cleanse the promised land
  - 2. Very rare - only time in all of 1 Samuel; almost

never in 1 Samuel - 2 Chronicles

- 3. Yet the word occurs 7 times in this chapter - clear!
- 4. God specifies everything of Amalek is devoted [v3]
- 5. (This is why Saul can send the Kenites away - they are not part of this)
- 6. A very serious moment - Saul must obey

## III. Saul's Rebellion & Disobedience

- A. Saul does not fully obey the command  
Then Saul attacked the Amalekites all the way from Havilah to Shur, to the east of Egypt. <sup>8</sup> He took Agag king of the Amalekites alive, and all his people he totally destroyed with the sword. <sup>9</sup> 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. 1 Samuel 15:7-9
  - 1. Saul kills most of the people - but not the king
  - 2. Kill most of the animals - but not the 'good' ones
  - 3. Saul is partially obedient - but not fully
- B. Why this is so important
  - 1. This utterly ruins the concept of holy war
    - a. It makes it look like it is about spoils - it is not
    - b. It makes it look like favoritism rather than holiness
    - c. It leaves the prerogative with people rather than God
    - d. It substitutes their values for God

2. Partial obedience is disobedience
  - a. We are not free to obey the parts we like
  - b. To disregard part of God's word is rebellion

#### IV. God's Judgement of Saul

##### A. Samuel goes to confront Saul

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." <sup>13</sup> When Samuel reached him, Saul said, "The Lord bless you! I have carried out the LORD's instructions." <sup>14</sup> But Samuel said, "What then is this bleating of sheep in my ears? What is this lowing of cattle that I hear?" 1 Samuel 15:12–14

1. Samuel goes to look for Saul - who has erected a monument in his own honor
2. Saul is back at Gilgal - a key place in story of Saul
  - a. Where kingship was confirmed
  - b. Where Saul sacrificed without waiting for Samuel
  - c. What will happen there this time?
3. Saul greets Samuel with a pious blessing!
4. Saul says he has been obedient
5. Samuel's has an ominous question - how will Saul respond?

##### B. God's word of warning

1. God is not fooled by Saul's pious words; He sees all  
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." <sup>16</sup> "Stop!" Samuel said to Saul. "Let me tell you what the Lord said to me last night." "Tell me," Saul replied. 1 Samuel 15:15–16

- a. The prophet stops Saul's pious foolishness
- b. Saul acts as if he wants to know

##### 2. Saul is given another chance to repent

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. <sup>18</sup> 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.' <sup>19</sup> Why did you not obey the Lord? Why did you pounce on the plunder and do evil in the eyes of the Lord?" 1 Samuel 15:17–19

- a. Samuel recounts what happened
- b. Samuel asks again why Saul disobeyed
- c. The key moment - will Saul repent

##### C. Saul's disastrous response

"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. <sup>21</sup> 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." 1 Samuel 15:20–21

1. Saul denies he disobeyed - no repentance
2. Saul blame shifts the sin to the people  
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.”... <sup>20</sup> “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. <sup>21</sup> 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.” 1 Sam 15:15, 20–21

### 3. Saul excuses sin by religious ritual

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### D. God’s crushing word of final judgment

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. <sup>23</sup> 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.” 1 Samuel 15:22–23

1. God is not after ritual worship - He wants obedience
2. He prefers you to hear and obey His word
3. Your rebellion is witchcraft - you think you can manipulate God by sacrifices
4. Your arrogance is idolatry - you think you can make God to be Who you want Him to be

5. You thought you could do as you pleased, offer a little worship, and manipulate God
6. You thought you were wiser than God and stronger than God
7. You rejected God’s Word - and your kingship is now rejected - YOU HAVE PLAYED THE GAME OF THRONES - AND LOST
8. A consistent biblical theme

“The multitude of your sacrifices — what are they to me?” says the Lord. “I have more than enough of burnt offerings, of rams and the fat of fattened animals; I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats. <sup>12</sup> When you come to appear before me, who has asked this of you, this trampling of my courts? <sup>13</sup> Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me. New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations — I cannot bear your evil assemblies. <sup>14</sup> Your New Moon festivals and your appointed feasts my soul hates. They have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them. <sup>15</sup> When you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide my eyes from you; even if you offer many prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are full of blood; <sup>16</sup> wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight! Stop doing wrong, <sup>17</sup> learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow. Isaiah 1:11–17

### E. Saul’s real motives that produced disobedience

1. Saul was more afraid of people than God  
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.**” 1 Samuel 15:24

- a. He should have feared God, but feared the people
- b. This is a real temptation for all of us
- c. The multitudes NEVER want to fully obey God
- d. The multitudes pressure believers to compromise
- e. We will face more of this in the coming years!!

2. Saul wanted the best of the spoils

“Why did you not obey the Lord? **Why did you pounce on the plunder and do evil in the eyes of the Lord?**” 1 Samuel 15:19

- a. The plunder looked good to Saul - he wanted it
- b. Same as in the Garden, Achan’s sin at Ai
- c. His own desires led him to compromise

F. The response of God and Samuel

1. God is grieved He made Saul king

“**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....<sup>35</sup> **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.** 1 Samuel 15:11, 35

- a. God is sorry - He repents - he made Saul king
- b. Anthropomorphic language - but real response
- c. God does not change [v29] - but Saul has
- d. To be unchanging God must judge Saul

2. Samuel mourns and prays for Saul

“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....<sup>35</sup> 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. 1 Samuel 15:11, 35

- a. Samuel is troubled and mourned for Saul
- b. Samuel cries out to God for Saul
- c. Samuel will not go to Saul - he will not excuse his sin
- d. Yet there is no joy in seeing someone judged like this
- e. Anyone taking joy over another’s fall misses God’s heart
- f. Anyone rejoicing over the fall of a Saul has not considered their own sin!
- g. We must not compromise and excuse sin - but we must never act superior either. It should make us mourn!

**V. Applying the Word**

A. Where have I been tempted to compromise God’s Word?

- 1. Obeying the Word of God will not bring applause
- 2. We will be pressured to compromise & change God’s Word

3. Our own desires will lead us to compromise God's Word
4. Public pressure + our wayward desires = a powerful concoction to inebriate us to compromise!
5. Example - God's commands regarding sex
  - a. Our culture has wholeheartedly rejected God's command regarding sex
  - b. God says sex is wonderful - between a man & a woman who are married to one another
  - c. All other sex is sinful - we must wage holy war against it in our own heart and life
  - d. In a recent study conducted by [ChristianMingle.com](http://ChristianMingle.com), Christian singles between the ages of 18 to 59 were asked, "Would you have sex before marriage?" The response? Sixty-three percent of the single Christian respondents indicated yes!
  - e. This is utter disobedience to God's Word
  - f. Yet many refuse to heed God's Word and repent!
6. What areas of sin like this are in my life? Sex? The American dream (greed)? Language?

## B. The Table of Confession

1. Today we come to the Lord's Table
2. This Table calls us to examination and repentance  
A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. 1 Corinthians 11:28
3. This Table also calls us to receive forgiveness
  - a. Thanks be to God that He loves us!

- b. Thanks be to God that Christ has died for us!
- c. Thanks be to God that we are under the New Covenant!
4. This Table calls us to receive strength to obey
5. Come - examine & repent
6. Come - receive forgiveness
7. Come - receive strength to obey

## A Rebellious King Is Rejected

1 Samuel 15 (1 Samuel 15:22-23)

October 19, 2014

Communion

Hebrews 13:20-21

Teaching keywords: Biblical characters, fear, correction, idolatry and false gods, Lordship, obedience, sex

20 May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, 21 equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. Hebrews 13:20-21

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. <sup>23</sup> 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." 1 Samuel 15:22-23