

Saul's Fall from Glory

1 Samuel 15:1-35

INTRO:

We have tracked the work of God through Samuel the prophet and Saul the king. Thus far in the record Samuel obeyed God and anointed Saul the first king in Israel. Saul, began so well. He did not want the job as king and yet, he could not escape it. Starting out in submission to God and His prophet Samuel, Saul did exceedingly well in his reign. But now trouble came. We see in this one incident how far Saul has gone away from the LORD and from Samuel.

We learn some very important lessons in this text about our walk with the Living God. First, we are reminded how holy our God is. Second, we learn why Saul ended so badly. Finally, we learn What Real Repentance Looks Like. God is king of all or not king at all in our lives.

I. How Holy Our LORD Is (v. 1-10)

II. Why Saul Ended up Poorly (v. 12)

III. What Real Repentance Looks Like (v. 11-23)

I. How Holy Our LORD Is (v. 1-10)

A. We are attempting to cover a lot of territory in our study today, so instead of looking at each paragraph in detail we will try to look at the overview. We begin with the command that God issued to King Saul through Samuel. (1 Samuel 15:1-3)

“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. 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. Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have.’”

B. Our LORD is a Holy God. We sometimes think of God as a big softy. The Old Testament exists to remind us of how holy our God is. In the Bible, our God judges sin. ***“The wages of sin is death.” (Romans 6:23)*** Because the Amalekites attack the people of God when they came from Egypt, God decided it was time to bring punishment upon them. This seems exceptionally harsh to us in the twenty-first century. But the fact is, we forget so easily how holy God is and how blessed we are because God gives us grace in the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. Because Amalek had attacked Israel, God was going to destroy them. God's command was that they must all die including all of their cattle.

2. He will never do that to us only because we have run by grace through faith to His Son whom He gave for our sins.

II. Why Saul Ended up Poorly (v. 12)

A. God issued the command in the first paragraph to demonstrate His holiness and to avenge His people, but also to put Saul to the test and to show what Saul had become. Did Saul fail the test? **(1 Samuel 15:11-12)**

“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. 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.’”

B. The fact is Saul failed horribly. Look at what Saul did. After the battle he stopped to erect a monument to himself. (Does this not remind us of Samuel’s Ebenezer? **1 Samuel 7:12**) Then Saul brought the people to Gilgal where Samuel had brought the people after Saul’s initial victory to remind them of God’s place in the victory.

1. Saul did not have an independent connection to God. He needed the word from God through God’s prophet, Samuel. Here it looks as if King Saul is declaring his independence from God’s spokesman and God Himself. Saul was a big boy king, he did not need God or God’s prophet to tell him what to do.

2. There were some very important differences between Samuel’s Ebenezer and Saul’s monument. Samuel wanted the people to remember that thus far the LORD had helped them. Saul wanted them to remember that he had accomplished a great victory as their king. Second, Samuel brought them back to where God began the conquest of the land to offer the people’s sacrifices to God and to worship. Saul brought them there to offer up animals they took from the Amalekites and not their own to the LORD. Saul thought he could placate God with many sacrifices. Boy was he going to learn differently.

III. What Real Repentance Looks Like (v. 11-23)

A. So far we have noted God’s holiness and grace, Saul’s failure because he thought he could manipulate God. Finally, we are going to look briefly at what real repentance looks like. **(1 Samuel 15:13-19)**

“Then Samuel went to Saul, and Saul said to him, ‘Blessed are you of the LORD! I have performed the commandment of the LORD.’ But Samuel said, ‘What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?’ 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.’ 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.’ 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? 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.’ 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?”

B. When Saul attempts to defend his disobedience, Samuel’s answer is instructive to us.

(1 Samuel 15:21-23)

“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.’ 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. 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.”

1. God is interested in obedience more than doing all the ceremonious things. God is interested in what is in your heart and then how it shows itself in your life, more than whether you are doing your little holinesses.

2. When we repent of our sins (**1 John 1:9**), we must realize we can do nothing to make it up to God. We must receive His forgiveness by faith. We can never make anything up to God.

C. It looks on the surface that Saul repented, but God did not receive it. (**1 Samuel 15:24**)

“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.”

True repentance does not ever rely on mitigating circumstances. True repentance simply says to God, *“I have sinned.”*