

Rebellion - Saul's Great Mistake

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[0:00] 1 Samuel chapter 15 from verse 13. And Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of the Lord.

! I have performed the commandment of the Lord. And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?

This was Samuel coming to Saul, and Saul saying, He's done this for the Lord and that for the Lord. And then you hear this, Baaah! Baaah! And whew! How do cows go?

Whew! Moo! Moo! I hear these noises in the background because God told Saul to destroy all of the animals, all of the goods and the things of the Amalekites.

And it says in verse 15, And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites, for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God. And the rest we have utterly destroyed.

[1:02] Then Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what the Lord hath said to me this night. And he said unto him, Say on. And Samuel said, When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel? And the Lord anointed thee king over Israel? And the Lord sent thee on a journey and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they have been consumed. Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the Lord, but didst fly upon the spoil and didst evil in the sight of the Lord? And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, and have gone the way which the Lord sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek.

And have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice them unto the Lord thy God in Gilgal.

And Samuel said, Hath 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 hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king. Now it says there, verse 23, For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Samuel says to Saul that rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. That's heavy stuff, isn't it? That's pretty clear cut, what is being said there. We're going to look at some of that truth tonight.

The bottom line of this story is obey God. Number one, obey God. Whatever you do, whatever we do, God calls his people to obey him. To full obedience, to total and constant obedience. God wanted to preserve the nation, and so he told Saul, the king of Israel, to destroy the Amalekites.

[3:10] Now we see the result today, in our modern, current history, you see, Israel's got such trouble, because they didn't do the right thing way back here, in 1 Samuel 15.

They let the Amalekites live, and they're paying the consequence of that still. And Amalekites represent sin, the flesh, the things of the world. They never dealt with it back then. So we see, the first thing we see here is the deceitfulness of sin. Sin.

But Saul partly obeyed. In verse 9, Saul and the people spared Agag. Remember he was told to go and kill him. And the best of the sheep, the ox, the fatlings, the lambs, all that was good, and were unwilling to utterly destroy them.

It was basically, it was a sin problem. The problem was sin. Because sin is described as lawlessness. All sin is lawlessness. Sin is linked with disobedience or rebellion. In 1 John 3 verse 4.

Sin is man's rebellion against God. Sin is choosing to disobey God. It's saying, I'm going to go my way, and I'm going to do my own thing.

[4:23] It's like the song of Frank Sinatra. I did it my way. I'm going to do it my way. I'm not going to choose God's way. Sin is disobedience. It's rebellion to God's command. Or a lack of obedience to God's command.

Here you see, Saul trying to excuse what he did. That it was something that he had some good in mind out of it. But it wasn't what God wanted. And we can all ask of ourselves and of our own decisions, will we choose God's way or our way?

Let us not go our own sinful way. Let us give up our sin and go God's way. Because sin pays a penalty. And sin has wages. It's costly. Sin is going to cost you everything.

Sin is going to cost you your eternal life. It's going to cost you heaven. And sin is about heart attitude. Sometimes we can persist in our own stubborn, selfish, sinful ways.

And God's word urges us, harden not your hearts. Harden not your hearts. God searches the hearts of men. It says in the word of God, he searches the heart. And the inner man, he searches our emotions, our will.

[5:38] And rebellion in the heart shows through. You can see it in people's actions and attitudes. Someone has said that heart is the centre of our feelings, of our joys and sorrows, and also our anxieties and fears.

Sin is a problem. Something we need to take seriously. It's no laughing matter. Sin is something to really take account of. People with rebellious hearts are going to have to face up to an almighty God. And that's going to be costly. It's going to be very costly.

And someone said, when your heart is wrong, then nothing else is actually right. The people in the local church will not find things right about the church, about the pastor. They will see that which they can be critical of. Okay? We need to be cautious of that, of that wanting to see the negative. So instead to seek to surrender to God and to follow God. Disobedience disrupts our fellowship with God. And sin will be punished.

We see in this story, Samuel called Saul's sin rebellion. And Saul had disobeyed God's command. And what was the result? Now God was rejecting Saul as king. Saul paid for his sin. He paid for that rebellion.

[7:00] Rebels are to be rejected. Even in the New Testament, we hear two Thessalonians, Withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly. When someone is disorderly, we have to withdraw from them.

Because it's rebellion. In Romans 16 it says, Brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learnt, and avoid them.

Mark them. Avoid them. Rebellion is something that's dangerous. It contaminates it. It damages the church. It damages people. It damages families and communities. God's word details the dreadful damage that disobedience results in.

For example, we see how it brought destruction way back in the start of Genesis, in the Garden of Eden. The paradise of Adam and Eve. Disobedience. The world before the flood. Disobedience. The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. The life of the rebel prophet, Jonah. Lot's wife. Turned into a pillar of salt. And here, Saul, the first king of Israel. Disobedience marked the pages that tell us of their lives.

[8:09] And we can learn. I pray from that example. And take heed of it. Disobedience brings trouble. You know, there's someone wrote of taking their young daughter to school one day.

And he says, I turned right on red where it was prohibited. And I said, uh oh. He realised his mistake. I just made an illegal turn. And the daughter piped up in the back seat.

And he said, it's alright dad. The police car behind us did the same thing. You know, disobedience brings danger. Disobedience brings consequence.

And disobedience to God is a mark of lost people. Of lost people. Ephesians 2.2 talks of people are walking according to the prince of the power of the air.

The spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. Lost people are called the children of disobedience. It's something that marks them. The wrath of God comes on the children of disobedience.

[9:06] The wrath of God. God gets angry at sin. God gets angry at disobedience. God is angry at me when I do that which is wrong. At you when you choose that which is wrong.

God is angry at the wicked. God is grieved when his children do not obey his commands. It says, grieve not the Holy Spirit. In Ephesians 4.30.

The Holy Spirit has feelings. Grieve means to cause sorrow or sadness. You know, some cults have the view that the Holy Spirit is just some impersonal force.

But the word of God describes the Holy Spirit as a very real person. The person of God the Holy Spirit. He is a real person. And he feels sorrow and sadness when God's children are disobedient. We should strive to make God glad, not sad. To strive to please him and obey him. It says that at the end of the world, in 2 Thessalonians 1, In flaming fire, God is going to take vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the gospel.

[10:15] So we see number one, sin. Sin is seen in the pages of this account of Saul, of his disobedience, of his rebellion. Sin. We need to be aware of it in all its sneaky ways.

The second thing we can highlight from this account is submission. Submission. The Bible shows us people either submitting to God or rebelling against God.

There is a choice for every one of you. Every one of us, we can choose to submit to God or to rebel against God. A rebel is one that has been defined as resisting or rising up against authority.

Now sometimes the world we live in, it glorifies rebels. For example, Ned Kelly. Ned Kelly is glorified in Australian culture and yet really, he was a rebel. Essentially, he was a lawbreaker.

And so, submission is something that God is pleased with as we submit to his word. But man tends, in his own way, to rather than obey God, to rebel.

[11:19] And God's word shows this constant conflict right through the pages of scripture between submission and rebellion. Between obedience and disobedience. Between authority and what is essentially witchcraft.

Rebellion. God gave Saul very clear specific commands. In verse 3 of 1 Samuel 15, he specifically tells through the prophet Samuel, He said, Go and smite Amalek.

Go and smite Amalek. Kill him. In other words. And utterly destroy all they have and spare them not. But slay, kill both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.

All of the property of the Amalekites was to be destroyed as well as Amalek himself. It says in verses 7 to 9 that Saul smote the Amalekites and he took Agag, the king of the Amalekites alive. Saul and the people spared Agag and the rest of the sheep and of the oxen and so on and would not utterly destroy them. So we see they partly obeyed. They partly submitted.

[12:37] God had clearly given his word to Saul. But after Saul went into battle, he obeyed the Lord only in part. And sometimes as Christians too, we can do the same.

Still want to keep that part of us for ourselves and our own ways. It's like it's been said that we give God our heart and our heart is like a dwelling, a place that God resides.

But sometimes we want to keep some rooms in that house to ourselves. But God wants all of our heart. He wants our whole heart. He says, love the Lord your God with all your heart. With all your heart.

And so on. And so in verses, so God had clearly given his word to Saul. But after Saul went into battle, he only obeyed in part. And we see this all too often.

We're living in a lawless world. We see the lawlessness that's around us. We see graffiti and vandalism. Things getting smashed all around us. People just couldn't care less.

[13:36] They couldn't care less about right and wrong. About common decency. And they're not willing to submit to authority. We see it marked in our day especially as we see policemen cursed and sworn at by people.

And so on. That, you know, just what you would think would be common decency is disregarded in our world today. It's a world filled with rebellion.

We see that rebellion too in personal relationships between parents and children. Between husband and wife. Where there's a danger. With this lack of submission. Healthy submission that the Bible calls us to have.

Do we only partly obey God? Friends, we know that that's true. That for any of us at times, that we only partly obey God. We only go so far in obeying God.

Let's instead have that willingness to be a living sacrifice. To let him have everything. Okay. Submission brings order. Think about, in our world for example, the order that submission brings. [14:42] In families, as wives to husbands, as children to parents. Submission brings order. In the church, the necessary leadership and godly leadership, there's necessary submission.

It brings order. In civil government. As this submission to police and military and government officials. Of course, there's times when we could contest that something is unlawful too. I know, for example, Pastor Neil is making quite a stand against abortion of late. There's a new site that he's developing concerning abortion.

It's got some gripping images. Awful images of what is going on in the world today. And of course, abortion is legal.

It's legal but it doesn't make it right. And so they're making a stand against that. We could think of how submission brings order in education. As students are submitted to teachers.

[15:42] That's a healthy thing. In business too. Employees too. Their superiors. Their supervisors. Submission brings order. It brings order. And isn't it so much better in our lives to have order?

For our worlds to have been orderly and peaceful. Where there's a rightful authority. Where there's peace. And right relationships. And how much more important than all of those examples.

Is for you and I. Our submission to God. How much more vital. How much more essential. Our submission to God. Do you have a submissive spirit to the Lord. Towards Him.

James 4.7 it says, Submit therefore to God. If God resists the devil. And he will flee from you. Dare we disobey the commandments. Of a holy and just God.

We've lost the awe of God. In our world. And obedience to God. Saul was just living. In a. You could say a cafeteria style. Where he was choosing what.

[16:43] Of what God had said to obey. To pick and choose what he would obey. It says in verse 20. He claims that he obeys the Lord. But he hadn't done what God had commanded him to do.

And he even claimed a religious reason. For what he had done. And Samuel tells him. Verse 22. It's better to obey the Lord.

Than to sacrifice. As much as. Maybe there was some good intention there. In part. It wasn't what the Lord was pleased with. And we too.

In any of our lives. Having that submissive spirit to God. Is where it brings order. It brings harmony. It brings blessing. As God will. Will honor that.

Faithfulness to. His. Rightful way. And submission to God's authority. In his word. Is so vital too. Brothers and sisters. The word of God. This is your authority. This is our authority.

[17:39] For how to live. The word of God. The word of God. God's word reveals to us. His will. And his ways for us. We must learn to walk by the spirit.

So that we'll not carry out. The lusts of the flesh. To be prayerful at all times. To constantly ask the Lord to guide. And strengthen us to walk in his ways.

The Bible talks of obedience to the gospel. Obedience to the very gospel. What's the gospel? The good news. That the Lord Jesus Christ. Died for our sins.

Was buried. Rose again. Is alive forever. As the sacrifice for our sin. For your sin and mine. And it talks about an obedience to the gospel.

In other words. Obey. That needful command. To repent. And to receive Christ as your Lord and Savior. Obedience to the gospel is so critical.

[18:35] So essential. What about submission to God's will? Submission to God's will. Now sometimes we can go in life. Our own merry way. More than anything else.

More than sacrifice. More than suffering. More than giving. More than prayer. More than service.

God is looking for obedience. He's looking for that heart. That is in tune with his Holy Spirit.

Here's a quote. That's called. His plan for me. His plan for me. His plan for me. When I stand at the judgment seat of Christ. And he shows his plan for me.

The plan of my life. As it might have been. Had he had his way. And I see. How I blocked him here. And checked him there. And I would not yield my will.

Will there be grief in my Savior's eyes. Grief though he loves me still. Would he have me rich. And I stand there poor. Stripped of all but his grace.

[19:35] While memory runs like a hunted thing. Down the paths I cannot retrace. Lord of the years that are left to me. I give them to thy hand. Take me.

And break me. And mould me. To the pattern that thou hast planned. The will of God. Seek it for your life. Seek his will.

Whatever it be. Someone has said the best way to know. God's will is to say. I will to God. Say I will. Whatever it be. Have that hard attitude of submission. Someone put it like this. To know the will of God. Is the greatest knowledge. To find the will of God.

Is the greatest discovery. And to do the will of God. Is the greatest achievement. A little prayer we could. Pray is. Dear God. Your will.

[20:30] Nothing more. Nothing less. Nothing else. Amen. Seek his will for your life. Bear your heart before him. And plead for him to guide you.

In the days ahead. In the way ahead. In the way forward. That God will have his way with you.

Sometimes I think. We can all make the mistake. Of being so active.

And busy. And running hither and thither. And missing the point. Of what God really wants us to do. Of what really counts. When the chips are down. When life's over. And there's no more time left.

When we look back. When we look back. In regret. At what could have been. I pray not. I pray we'll take every opportunity. So we see sin.

In Saul's account. We see. Submission. In. The great need. That he. Lacked that submission. And we see. Surrender. Surrender.

[21:28] Surrender. Surrender is what. Would have. Made the difference. If Saul had just surrendered. The self life. Needs to be surrendered. Rebellion is. Related to pride. And pride.

Is refusing. God's authority. It leads men. To do wicked things. Which hurt God's heart. God is good. He's wise. He's righteous.

He wants the best for you. Rebellion. Is. Stupid. And evil. And yet. We know. In our world. It's often. Those that are. Painted as the. Stars. And heroes. The. Idols. Of our world. Generally. God rejecting. And sin loving people.

The world. Praises rebels. Praises rebellion. It praises. Godlessness. And. Yet. As God's people. Shouldn't we be marked. Shouldn't there be something.

[22:25] About your life. And mine. That marks us. As different. Heart. Is surrendered to him. Not to the world. And its ways. And. Pride can come as. We refuse to listen.

To the word of God. We refuse to obey it. And heed it. As Saul did. Failed to. And this rebellious nature. Must be put to death. Before man can ever become. A loving.

Trusting. Obedient. Son of God. God. Think of the soul value that. You know. Often I think of. The people around us. Children.

Young people. Older people. The community around us. The people that you see down at the shops. The train station. Down at the workplace. At the school yard. You see the people.

Scurrying here and there. Everyone. Is very precious. Because. In that skin. In that flesh. Is a soul.

[23:20] A soul. So valuable. So precious. That Christ. Gained. His life. And it says. If we should gain the whole world. If.

Even if we. Were to amass the fortune of the whole world. It would be. Worth nothing. In.

Comparison. Comparison. With losing. Our own soul.

The soul value. Think of your value. Think of your soul's value tonight. Will you rebel or submit? Will you give your hearts. And surrender to him?

Or will you continue. In a way. Of rebellion. Of Christ rejection. Or will the spirit. Of obedience to God. Take over. What is at stake?

What is at stake? What is at stake? There is a. A way of thinking about it. What is the soul worth?

What is the soul worth? What is your soul worth tonight? The courts.

And friends tonight, Christians tonight, let's confess our sin to God, our sin nature, and seek his pardon to see that carnality cleansed out of our heart. Someone put it like this, Jesus is Lord whether you accept him or not.

[29:47] That's so true, isn't it? Some people think we make Jesus Lord. We accept Jesus as Lord, but Jesus is Lord whether you accept him or not. One day you're going to bow your knee to him.

One day your tongue's going to confess to him, and it's going to just happen like automatic because it's going to be all over. Red Rover. Will you bow the knee to his authority now?

Jesus is Lord whether you accept him or not. Friends, you need to repent, to trust him, to deal with that rebellious spirit, and ask the Lord to search our lives.

Ask him to deal with those different areas. Search your heart tonight. It says the psalmist cried out, Search me, O God, and know my heart. See if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Ask the Lord to search your heart tonight. To search out, and to search and destroy that which is of the old self. Are you dead to self yet?

[30:47] I think sometimes, as Christians, there's still a lot of self left, isn't there? There's still a lot of the flesh, of the old ways, of the old nature, of our selfishness, our inherent selfishness.

Because really, everyone is inherently selfish. It's been said that when, a man called James Calvert, went out as a missionary, to the cannibal Fiji Islands.

The Fiji Islands, there are still cannibals there. The people on board the ship, tried to put him off. They said to James, they said, You will risk, your own life, and the lives of all who sail with you, if you go among such savages.

These were cannibals, they're going to eat him, for breakfast, or one of the meals of the day. This was serious. This was dangerous. This was certainly, stepping outside the comfort zone, to go amongst the savages.

Calvert's magnificent reply was, We died, before we came here. We died, before we came here. I know, sometimes, as we witness, and we ridicule, and the flesh nature, would repel, against the thought, as any one of us, would be discomfited, by people mocking, or scorning, when we're trying to do something, for God, and you're going to be criticized, you're going to be mocked.

[32:14] And yet, we died. We've died already. We're not here, to win a popularity contest, to win people's praise. The only one, we really want, to honour and praise, is God.

And to be willing, to go God's way. And for each one of you here tonight, I encourage you, whatever it be for your life, whatever your future holds, let it be, that you place it, in God's hands.

That you place your life, at His disposal. Have you completely surrendered, to Jesus Christ?

Completely surrendered. To not just pretend, to not just, play games, but to really mean it, to really, honestly, truly, place your life, in His hands, for time and eternity.

To come to that place, where you died to yourself. That old way, that old person, is crucified with Christ. It's no longer I that live, but Christ, that liveth in me.

So let us obey, the King's invitation tonight. The King, is wanting you, and I, to surrender, to His way, to His kingdom. And I challenge you tonight, to completely trust, in Jesus Christ, to have an unconditional surrender.

[33:34] An unconditional surrender. You know when they, get the warring armies, to sign the form. It's unconditional surrender. It's not, I surrender if, I'm still allowed to do this, or that, or have certain things, that, they wanted to hang on to.

When Japan surrendered, to the USA, it was unconditional surrender. No conditions, you're totally at the mercy, of the, conquering power, that you're vanquished by.

And likewise too, as a Christian, shouldn't we be totally, at His mercy, at the one who's vanquished us, who's conquered us, and our heart is yielded, as a sacrifice to Him, to have that, unconditional surrender.

Not a God, on our terms. Some people want a God, on our terms. A God who, they can follow, when it's rosy and easy. And a God, who they can, shop around, and find, that just meets their need.

It's a God, on His terms. On His terms. Not a half-heartedness. God wants all your heart, all your love. And friends tonight, I urge you, each one, as brothers and sisters tonight, let's find, what God wants for our lives.

[34:46] Let us pray. Lord, we praise you tonight, for your love and grace, Lord, that in Calvary's tree, where that blood was shed, you demonstrated, your great love, you demonstrated, your great wrath, against our sin, against our flesh.

Lord, help us, to repent, to seek, your way, your will. Help us, Lord, to have our hearts yielded, in glad surrender, in glad submission.

Lord, that you would have, that absolute sway, in each life. Lord, that if there's homes, and hearts here tonight, where sin has the, rule, that you would, tear that down.

Tear down the self, from the heart, Lord. Tear that, selfish way, that selfish nature, away from that throne, of the hearts tonight. That you would be, Christ and Lord, and King.

Of each one, that you would be enthroned, in every life tonight. Lord, that they would say, each one would say, not just say, but, have Christ, as their Saviour, as their King, as their Master, as their Absolute Lord.

[35:56] Lord, that it be true tonight. As you would help, each one to do that. And, help us, Lord, to walk in your faith, in your light, in your love, in your Spirit.

As you give us strength too, we pray. Help each one, we pray. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen.