

Obeying the Voice

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[0 : 0 0] We have a short while this evening. I would like to turn and let the Lord help consider words we have in the chapter we read together. 1 Samuel chapter 15.

And let me again read verse 22 and following.

And 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 hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and endodity.

Because none of us rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king. I think obedience to the Lord is a clear mark of the Lord having the Lord to be the Lord blessed. That individual. And if we were to read through the list of the Old Testament saints mentioned in Hebrews chapter 11, we find a number of references there to the way these individuals obeyed the word of the Lord. For example, in Hebrews 11, 7, by faith Noah, being warned of God, of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his family. The Lord spoke to him, telling him of the impending flood, and asking him to make permission of an ark for the saving of himself and his family. And Noah obeyed God in that respect. And then also we see in the life of Abraham, verse 8, in Hebrews 11, by faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place he was even after we see from inheritance, obeyed, and he went out not away with the reward. That's just two examples from this chapter. Marking these people as people whom the Lord had blessed, and showing forth the blessing of the Lord upon them by their obedience to the word of God. And the Lord Jesus himself says, if you love me, keep my commandments.

Keep my commandments. So obedience to the word of God is a mark of true faith. Now in chapter 15 of 1 Samuel, we have an account of a situation that the king of Israel, King Saul, found himself in. And he had been king for a good number of years. And he had done great things, particularly at the beginning of his reign. It seems that he was quite a self-effacing man. When he was first anointed, he was called upon to appear before the people and they couldn't find him. And they eventually found him hiding among the staff. Self-effacing, seeming very humble in many respects. And also he was active in dealing with the Philistines, the enemies of the Lord and the Lord's people. And he was a few months after many years. But this chapter tells of one particular incident and it shows King Saul up in a very bad light. And under four headings, I'd like to say a few words. First of all, the clear command that the Lord gave to King Saul. And secondly, the Lord gave to King Saul. And secondly, the Lord gave his

[5 : 1 6] And secondly, having in his own mind fulfilled the command of God, nevertheless Samuel accounts and highlights that there were servants among the people and among the congregation that proved that Saul had not fulfilled the commandment of God.

And thirdly, in the verses we highlighted as the text, verses 22-23 and so on, the awfulness of his sin that Saul was found gifted of.

And fourthly, one or two lessons for ourselves, bringing the situation that Saul found himself in and the working of it to bear upon ourselves, because we are commanded also by the Lord in various ways to live unto his glory and not unto our own aims.

Firstly, then, the clear command that the Lord here gives to King Saul through Samuel.

Now go, he says in verse 3, and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not, but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.

[7 : 09] Why did the Lord require this? It seems an extreme thing to have to do. Well, if you go back into the book of Deuteronomy and also in the book of Exodus, you will find that these Amalekites, they caused the children of Israel extreme difficulty when the Israelites were on journey from Egypt on the way to the Promised Land.

They didn't hurt them in any way at all. In fact, they opposed them. 400 years have now passed since that situation prevailed when the children of Israel were coming from Egypt into the Promised Land and they had the difficulty from the Amalekites.

400 years have now passed until the days of Saul and Samuel. And Saul is asked to go and annihilate the people of Amalek.

Isn't it amazing that the Lord remembered these things? And maybe the people who actually caused Israel trial and tribulation when they were coming out of Egypt on the way to the Promised Land, maybe they didn't suffer adversely at all.

But their children and their children's children are here going to suffer extermination, annihilation, because the sins of the fathers are being visited on their children, and to the third and fourth generation of those who hated them.

[9 : 10] And they said, God has a long memory. And as always we close to remember, that God has a long memory. One day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years is one day.

And the time had now come. It's as if the cup of the Amalekites was now full. They had had 400 years to repent and turn to the Lord in true confession and repentance.

And they hadn't done so. They were at the horn in the side of the Israelites for all of these years. And the Lord said to him, Zinna. And he commanded kings all to go and annihilate these enemies of God and his cause.

It's a clear command. Read the verse again. And he said, Go and smite Amalek. Utterly destroy all that they have. Spare them not, but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.

And Saul gathered the people together, numbered them in two hundred thousand fruit men, and ten thousand men of Judah. And Saul came to a city of Amalek and laid weight in the valley.

[10 : 37] And he said to the Canaanites, Go and depart, get you out from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them. The Canaanites were the people to whom Moses' father-in-law belonged.

And the Canaanites, particularly Moses' father-in-law, he seems to have stayed with the children of Israel and helped them on their wilderness journey.

Moses said to them, You shall be unto us for life. In other words, he knew the wilderness, he knew how to deal with situations in practical terms, and it seems that he went along with them and helped them.

And the Lord remembered that. And here we find King Saul saving the Canaanites, telling them to go away from among the Amalekites, lest they also be destroyed.

And then in verse 7, we see Saul setting about this task of destroying the Amalekites. He smote the Amalekites from Abila, and drew the comens to Shurub that is over against Egypt.

[11 : 53] And the Duke Aga, the king of the Amalekites, alive, utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. But Saul in the people spared Aga, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them.

But everything that was vile and refused, that they utterly destroyed. And then when the word of the Lord came to Samuel, in verse 10 and 11, the Lord said, You repent of me, that I have set up Saul to be king.

But he has turned back from following me, and has not performed my commandments. And it believed Samuel, and he cried unto the Lord all night.

But he went up in the morning to meet Saul. And Samuel came to Saul in verse 13, and Saul said to him, Blessed be thou of the Lord, I have performed the commandment of the Lord.

And he felt that he has fulfilled what God asked him to do. And then Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleeding of the sheep in my ears, and the loving of the oxen, which I hear?

[13 : 31] There was proof, audibly, around them, and physically around them, from the animals that they had spared, that Saul had not fulfilled the commandment of the Lord.

And there was a sense in which that poses a question of myself and yourself. The Lord asks us to live in a particular way.

But are there voices of sins, and the presence of sins, of disobedience, seen and heard and noticed by others around us from day to day?

That's what happened with these people. That's what happened with these people. Saul and those who were with them. They thought that they were doing the Lord's business.

But they didn't fulfil it according to the Lord's commandment. It's a frightening thing, isn't it? That people can be hearing the voice or the breathing of the sheep of my sins, and the loving of the oxen of my sins, in my life, round my doctrine, in my conversation, in my aptitudes, in my lifestyle.

[15 : 07] And I, my God, I, my God, be not aware of it. Samuel was aware of it. What mean as then this breathing of the sheep, in my ear, and the load of the oxen, which I hear?

And then you see the King Saul explaining the situation. Verse 15. They, that is, the people, they have brought them from the Amalekites.

For the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen in sacrifice unto the Lord thy God, and the rest we have utterly destroyed. It's as if they were saying, well, the sheep are so powerful, and the oxen, wouldn't it be marvellous to keep them from being slaughtered so that we might sacrifice them to the Lord in Gilbera?

And the people seemingly prevailed against King Saul to make this decision. And they kept the animals alive.

Animals that the Lord had specifically mentioned that they were to be put to death. And then Samuel sits to explain things to King Saul, verse 16.

[16 : 35] Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell you what the Lord has said to me this night. And he said, Say no. He is eager to hear us at work, but the Lord is going to say.

Verse 17. When thou hast little in thine own sight, was 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, utterly destroy the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed. Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the Lord, but its fly upon the spoil, and its evil in the sight of the Lord?

And Saul answered, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, and have gone the way which the Lord sent me, and have brought Agath the king of Ammon, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites.

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

[17 : 47] He and the people were justifying their disobedience by saying, It's a good idea to take the best of the animals for sacrificing to the Lord thy God.

To have a visible and tangible way by which we show forth that we are worshipping God. We go to the altar, we kill the animals, we sacrifice them, there will be smoke there rising from the altar, and so on and so on.

There will be a clear indication that we are worshipping the Lord. We are worshipping the Lord. Whereas all the time, there is at the very centre of that plan and attitude, total disobedience to the word of God.

And we may be in danger of this kind of sin ourselves. If we merely attend the visible meetings of the people of God, and people see us coming and going.

But all the time, things really are not right, at the centre of our lives. This is what was true, the people of the people.

[19 : 17] They wanted to make a show of the religiosity by sacrificing to the rest of these animals. But all the time, they were overlooking the very important point, that they have disregarded the word of God.

that they have disregarded the word of God. And then Samuel explains, Has the Lord, verse 22, as great do you like in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord?

It is more important to obey than sacrifice. Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fatal hands.

And then he explains the gravity of the sin of which these people were guilty. Verse 23, Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as the iniquity and idolatry.

Rebellion, that is opposing and countering the word of God and the will of God and the commandment of God.

[20 : 46] Rebellion against it is as the sin of witchcraft. Rebellion against it is as the sin of witchcraft. The emphasis on that phrase, the sin of witchcraft, is that we are happier to take direction and instruction from other waters than from God himself.

Those involved in witchcraft were into augury and things of that nature, whereby they would look on the flight of birds and things of that nature to lead them in their thinking and in their planning.

Rather than listening to the word of God, they would look on the way of God and what God was saying. They would look to other sorts of direction. And that is what was happening here. King Saul listened to the prevailing voice of the people and it is the debacle under them.

And it is the will of the people to keep these animals alive. And Paul, King Saul, should have listened to the Lord rather than to the voice of the people.

King Saul, who is the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and as iniquity.

[22 : 10] You see, the people who were with Saul, they weren't into idolatry as such. They hadn't imbibed the idolatry of the Canaanites to that extent.

But the fact that they did this and blatantly disregarded God's word, it was as if they were into idolatry wide up to their eyes.

And then it says, because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king. What are the lessons for myself? And maybe for yourselves?

I am going to highlight two or three things from the New Testament. It tells us as Christians how we ought to live.

And in the Epistle to the Colossians, first of all, I am going to mention verse 5 of Colossians 3.

[23 : 30] 1. 2. 3. 4. 4. 5. 5. 6. 6. 7.

7. 8. 8. 8. 9. 9. 10. 10. 10. 10. 11.

11. 11. 12. 12. 13. 12. 13.

14. 14. 15. 15. 15. 16. 16. was audible to all around. And we are asked to put to death our members which are upon the earth.

What does he mean by that? Well the scripture tells us and the confession of faith tells us that we still have our imminent of corruption within us.

[24 : 44] And there is potential in the remnant of corruption that is in us to lead us into this obedience of various kinds.

And it says here, we have to put them to death. Things like fornication, sins of the mind, sins of thought, sins of word and action. How are we going to do this?

Well in Romans chapter 8 and verse 13 it says this, that ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live.

We need the leading and enabling of the Holy Spirit of God in our lives to identify to us what these evil meanings are.

And we need his strength and his grace and his enabling in order to put him to death. We cannot do it on our own. If left to ourselves, we cannot do it.

[26 : 16] Nevertheless, we cannot do it. Nevertheless, we cannot do it on our own. Nevertheless, we cannot do it by day. To the Lord and ask him for the Spirit's enabling in order to have our thoughts and affections set upon the things that are not bad and not on the things that are near.

It says in the book of Proverbs, with all diligence keep your heart. Out of the heart was he, evil fought, murdered, all sorts of evil things.

But if by God's grace we are able to keep our heart and to mortify these evil meanings and rebellious thoughts and inclination, the Lord will give us to be a fragrance in this sad world.

While the man's sake. So all his life, at this point in particular, was more of a scent in the nostrils of God than a fragrance.

I mean, if you listen to the Galatians of chapter 5, in verse 1 we have this.

[27 : 45] Those who have been blessed by the Lord, it says here, I think I've got the wrong reference there.

Those who are Christ's, they have death with the flesh. Death with it in such a way, verse 24 it says, They that are Christ's, are crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

They have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. The Lord gives us clear commandments as to how we ought to live, how we ought to worship, how we ought to serve.

And these clear commandments are not negotiated. When the Lord says, this is the way, walk in it. We mustn't be looking for other ways. We mustn't be looking to do our own thing.

And ask the Lord, and ask the Lord, that we ought to sway from straight and down. That's what happened here. The people seemingly prevailed upon King Saul, and he himself was a command anyway, to believe the people and to do what was visibly popular at the time.

[29 : 37] I thought long, long, long about preaching this here, this evening. I thought about the two or three texts that I would like to have taken. But I repeatedly came to this text, these words.

We are very searching for myself and for everyone. But the Lord said here, through Simon, that the sin of which this man was guilty, that it was like iniquity and idolatry.

The rebellion and idolatry. The rebellion and idolatry. This rebellion and the rebellion of his heart was like witchcraft and his stubbornness as iniquity, and idolatry.

May God grant us always to have a rear open to what he says, and grant us the grace to be able to crucify the flesh and to walk in newness of life, showing of newness of life by continuing to obey his work. Trust and obey. Trust and obey. That should be a core rule in the life of every Christian.

May God bless these folks. Help us, Lord, to be thankful that we are in possession of the Holy Scripture.

[31 : 28] And we ask that the Spirit of God may teach us this evening and always to comply with what you say and not with what we ourselves say.

Lead us in a way everlasting. And bless the congregation as we heard as we continue being with our second pastor.

We grant them, O Lord, to be kept and blessed richly through the ministry and the prayers of your people.

And give us all our continued spirit of fear, for one another and for the cause of Christ among us. Remember these parts of the world where people are subject to war and the atrocities that happen.

Lord of God, we pray that you would intervene and that evil men would be put down and that justice and righteousness would be established.

[32 : 40] Put before us now and forgive our many sins in Jesus' name. Amen. everything and equality as we do.

Angelica 26.