

7 Ways to Shipwreck Your Faith - Lessons From a King

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[0 : 00] good to hear from you. My name is BK. I have the pleasure of serving as one of the pastors here, and I'm welcoming you to our sermon series on the Old Testament. We've been kind of working our way through demonstrating how each of these books of the Bible fit into the entire story of the gospel.

Let's be honest, when it comes to the Old Testament, a lot of us get lost. We don't really understand where it fits in. Well, this is a series meant for you to kind of help how to partition, understand, and where it's going. This morning, I want to give you some advice that you're probably not used to receiving. I want to be able to give you some foolproof advice on how to absolutely wreck your life and faith. It's usually not a message that you hear from a pulpit, but I think I really want to tell you about this. The fact of the matter is, we live in a day and age where many of the themes that you see on social media, whether it be TikTok or X, formerly known as Twitter, discusses the Christian deconstruction, where people who once profess to be Christians, Christians who are now not Christians. And they kind of share with you their stories about how they quote-unquote lost their faith. And some of these videos, they give you many reasons why they lose their faith. One of the reasons is my 22-year-old youth pastor couldn't answer all the questions that I had about my Bible. So I left the faith. Another one was, someone wasn't very nice to me at church, took the last cookie at coffee break, and now I don't want to go to church.

Sometimes one guy wrote, you know, I was at the grocery store and Eddie the Elder was there, and he wasn't too nice to the grocery clerk. So I don't want to be a part of the Christian faith anymore. And another one is, I felt forced to go as a child and felt forced to believe, but now that I'm out of my own, I don't want to believe anymore. Now, what's really interesting, and you know, there's hundreds of reasons that are out there. They tell you why they left the Christian faith, but they never explain how to leave the Christian faith. So this morning, I want to answer for you the how. How does one as a believer in Christ, or professes to believe a believer in Christ, a God follower, get away from Jesus? So if you are looking for an example of someone who has shipwrecked their faith,

I've got the perfect mentor for you. His name is Saul, and he was the first king of Israel. His life is a master class on how to ruin everything good God has given you. It's a master class in how to ruin everything that God gives you. So this morning, the sermon title, as you can read, is Seven Ways to Shipwreck Your Faith, Lessons from a King. So the first way to ruin your life is to start strong.

Start strong, give credit to God, then ignore God completely. Now, first, I need to give you guys a little bit of background so this will make sense. If you guys know we're in 1 Samuel, right? You guys all have your Bibles opened on your laps, right? Come on, you guys are with me. Or, you know, Cam's got his phone, right? He's going to use his phone or an iPad or electronic. You want to be in here. And we've talked about where we are in the Old Testament. Last time I preached, we talked about the contrast between the book of Joshua and the book of Judges. The book of Joshua is a narrative of God's people living under God's rule in obedience to God. They had a leader named Joshua. The book of Judges is a book that spans almost 400 years. And the people are described as not living after God, but these were God's people that he chose to make a nation. So if you guys remember, three things for a nation.

[4 : 49] God needs a people, a leader, and a land. That's how you get to be a nation. God, through the book of Joshua and Judges, is the record of God bringing his people, 12 tribes, into what we know today as Israel. The land will be a little bit different, but it's the same piece of land that we generally have today. Now, what was interesting is that when those 12 tribes went in, they kind of started looking after their own self-interests. They weren't really united. Even though they were all named after the sons of Jacob, they were all kind of doing their own thing. And one of the things is they lacked unity. And one of the things they need to do is they need to be, they need to learn to come together to work as one. This book that you have before you, 1 Samuel, is the record of God bringing the 12 tribes that are in Israel together to work as one. In the book of Judges, there were these judges, and several of them functioned as priests. So there was a religious aspect to their life. But what would happen is they would fall into trouble. They would worship other gods. They would get in trouble. Then they would pray out to God, God, please help us. God would send in a judge. And we know some of the judges, Gideon,

Samson, Deborah, these people who rose in and rescued God's people, established God to be the mantra, and then they'd kind of fall back again. Now there's a transition that happens. God is no longer going to use what's called priest judge, but he's going to use prophet judges. These are judges who will speak the oracles of God. The last prophet was Moses. It's been 400 years. So God raises this man named Samuel. And he is to be God's spokesman to the people. And 1 Samuel begins with an incredible story.

Israel is in devastation. And there's this young woman, her name is Hannah, and she's praying at the place where they worship, where they kept the ark in the city of Shiloh. And she's calling that God would bless her and give her a child. And that child would be Samuel. What's interesting is God, God's the hero of the story. If anybody tells you that someone else is the hero of the story of the Bible, they're wrong. God is the hero of the story. And just to prove his point, he takes Hannah, who is barren by the way. And if you guys have been with us, God just seems to use these women who are barren to demonstrate that he's in control of what's going on. We see this with Sarah. We saw this Rebecca.

We see these relationships and Rachel that they're barren. And just that God's going to show, hey, I made the promise and I'm going to keep it for you. So this woman prays. God hears her and she's blessed with a son named Samuel, who will be the voice of God that Israel hasn't heard for over 400 years. So Samuel 1, 3, the first three chapters, it's God raising up Samuel to be his chosen instrument. Hannah dedicates him to the Lord. She's given up her son that he may serve God. Samuel 4 to 7. This is when he becomes a spiritual leader.

Israel, it's dark. He is the light. He's moving through the land. The land is in both spiritual and moral decline. And he's starting to preach God's word and people are starting to believe. They're starting to come together. The common word revival begins to happen. And what's different about Samuel is that he has spiritual integrity. He's not abusing the station that he has to enrich himself, which is in contrast to the judges and some of the priests that were before him.

[9 : 30] What's interesting is that leading up between 4 and 7, I'd encourage you to take the time to read that because what happens is one of the priests, Eli, has these two sons and the Philistines are coming against them. So they decide they're going to war. They're going to take this Ark of the Covenant with them. And they never lost, right? When Israel showed up with the Ark of the Covenant, they always won, but they lost because God did not bless what they were doing. Both of Eli's sons are killed when Eli, the priest who was the ruling judge of the day, finds out about his son's death. He's hurt. But what he's more devastated by is the Philistines now have the Ark of the Covenant, which is the central point of worship for Israel. And if you want, and it's kind of funny, the stories, the Philistines take the Ark, they're all cheering. And all of a sudden, plagues start breaking out, right? If you guys remember

Indiana Jones, right? That's the whole kind of story. Holding that Ark, God's anointed peace starts wreaking havoc. And they decide to put the Ark in a cart. And they put two cows. And they just want it out. And they don't care where the cows go. They just want the Ark out of the land. So God, guess who brings the Ark back? It wasn't a victorious hero or an army. It was God demonstrating his power, even to the enemies, that Israel's God is the one who reigns. All right, you with me on that?

So this is kind of what's going on in the land. So in 1 Samuel 7, we read that there's beginning to be a restoration of righteousness in the land. There's beginning repentance. Israel's called to put away their foreign gods and serve the Lord exclusively. 1 Samuel 7, 10 says, as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to attack Israel.

But the Lord thundered with a mighty sound that day against the Philistines and threw them into confusion. And they were defeated before Israel. And the men of Israel went out from Mizpah and pursued the Philistines and struck them as far as below Beth-kar. So what this demonstrates is that Samuel's prayers matter. Having a man who is acting in the name of God is having consequences.

Verse 12 says, Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shenn and called its name Ebenezer. For he said, Till now the Lord has helped us. So the Philistines were subdued and did not again enter the territory of Israel. And on the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. So Samuel has distinguished himself quite differently than the judges that we read about in the book of Judges. There is now unity together between the tribes. And so we read in 1 Samuel 8, 4, and 7, Samuel is starting to age. And the elders of the land says, Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah and said to him, Behold, you are old and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint for us a king to judge us like all the nations. Now this is a really interesting request. They're asking a king to be appointed, a king like the other lands, rather than can we pray for the Lord to have a prophet come to us again? One who will speak for God, but they don't.

[13 : 41] Notice in verse 6 it says, But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed to the Lord. And the Lord said to Samuel, Obey the voice of the people and all that they say to you. For they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them.

See what God desired, what is called a theocracy, to be ruled by God, the voice being a prophet. But the people are struggling here. They want a king. And it's not that God is against them having a king. God wants them, because we've talked about the Davidic covenant that's coming up, so all these things were prophesied ahead of time. But God wants his people to have a king that will rule for God. The people here are asking for a king that will rule like the foreign nations.

Just to give them strength, give them direction. We want to be like everyone else. They did not want to have God ruling over them. You see, the first step, if you want to shipwreck your faith, is this is the starting point from which you want to work from. See, a lot of people who shipwreck their faith begin with, they're okay with God. They believe in God. They're all for God.

They don't deny God, but they will deny that God rules over every aspect of their lives. And in fact, they'll ask the question, is that what really God wants? God wants to waste his time with my life.

God really cares about my issues. I believe in him. Isn't that enough? And they will say, trust me, it's too complicated.

[15 : 39] So in the book of 1 Samuel, God gives them this man named Saul. And Saul starts off strong.

He starts off mighty. 1 Samuel 9, 1-2, it says there was this, he's a man from the tribe of Benjamin, and he had a son whose name was Saul. He was a handsome young man that was not a man among the people of Israel, more handsome than he. From his shoulders upwards, he was taller than any of the people. He's an imposing man. I was just talking to a friend, you know, there was one guy that I knew as a pastor, he's six foot eight, and he's got a thunderous voice. And I always think, man, if God's going to use someone to think this guy just can control the room, he's a mighty man.

So what's interesting is he starts off with humility. Let's be honest, everybody mops up humility, right? Modesty. He says, wow, how can I be king? Am I from the tribe of Benjamin? I'm the lesser of the tribes. Is it not my clan, the humblest of all the clans of the tribe of Benjamin?

Benjamin? Why then have spoken to me in this way? Why me? Why would you use me? People love that. Later on, in 1 Samuel 10.1, Samuel tells us that he actually prophesied that Saul, it said, then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on Saul's head and kissed him and said, has not the Lord anointed you to be prince over his people Israel? You shall reign over the people of the Lord and you will save them from the hand of their surrounding enemies. And this shall be a sign to you that the Lord has anointed you to be the prince over his heritage. So the second aspect we see, you start strong and be humble, allow people to praise you, to anoint you, to say that you were called to this. And then we read later in 1 Samuel 10.9, it says, when they came to Gebeah, behold, a group of prophets met him and the spirit of God rushed upon him and he prophesied among them.

And when all who knew him previously saw how he prophesied with the prophets, the people said to one another, what has come over the son of Kish? So even before he was anointed, this wasn't the kind of guy that's hanging out at the temple. This isn't the kind of guy they thought was kind of kingly material, or let's just say godly, priestly material, but they cannot deny that he is prophesying.

[18 : 24] So they say, therefore it became a proverb, is Saul also among the prophets? When he had finished prophesying, he came to the high place. The reality is when you read Samuel, 1 Samuel 11 to 14, Saul did some incredible things. He defeated, he experienced great victories over the Ammonites, the Philistines, and by all measures, he was a hero. Prophesied, he was seen to be this strong, mighty, mighty, godly figure. So when you start strong, bask in the blessings God brings your way, and people will give him credit for it. And when you're there, when you're in that position, you have done all that God's called you to, do your own thing. You've paid your dues, right?

You've been blessed. Why not just choose to do your own thing now? When God asks you to do something, just partially obey. You're a hero. You're someone. In 1 Samuel 15, the passage that Dave read to us this morning, Saul was instructed to wipe out King Agag of the Amalekites. In case you didn't know, we think this is quite bad, the Amalekites had a long history of hostility against Israel. When they came out of Egypt, they attacked them. And if you read the story of Esther, where God's got to save his people, the person Mordecai who stood against them, guess what he was? Amalekite.

Was Mordecai the good guy or the bad guy again? I'm forgetting. All right. Who's the bad guy in that one? Name. What? Thank you. Haman. There we go. Haman was Amalekite. So that's what happens when you didn't wipe out, you were causing problems for God's people.

So go read Esther 2 after. All right. So there was this divine judgment for their sins against Israel, which had been occurring for centuries. And as we read today in 1 Samuel 15, 9, it says, but Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep and of the oxen and of the fattened calves and the lambs and all that was good and would not utterly destroy them. Now get this.

And all that was despised and worthless, they devoted to destruction. That's like someone asking you to, someone going up to Dustin and asking him to sacrifice his most cherished guitar to the budding guitarist. And yet he gives him the ukulele that he had when he was six that has no strings and it's broken. Oh no, he can have that, right? It's stuff that was worthless to the people. But they were proud in defending this before God. You can have my garbage, God. It's too much for you to ask for the good things. So if you plan to shipwreck your faith, partial obedience is better than no obedience, right? In 1 Samuel verse 22 of chapter 15, it says, does the Lord delight in bird offerings?

[22 : 04] In sacrifice as much as in obeying the Lord? The fact is to obey is better than sacrifice. So the tip that I have for you, if you're looking to shipwreck your faith is start out passionate for God. Start out desiring the things of God. But once things are going well for you, when people are looking up to you and thinking that you have somehow have the hand of God on you, coast. Ignore his commands. This works every time. The fact of the matter is a good start means nothing without continued disobedience or continued obedience. So the first advice that I have for you is start strong, then ignore God. The second thing that I advise you to do is build your identity on other people's opinions.

Build your identity on other people's opinions. See, when Saul was confronted with his sin of not following the will of God and destroying Agag. You know what his excuse was? Let's look at verse 24.

Saul said to Samuel, I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord in your words. Great. Sounds perfect. Notice what he says. Because I feared the people and obeyed their voice.

This is the king of all of Israel who's commanded great armies and now he's using the people as an excuse for, forgive me, but that's the way they wanted it, God. Isn't that okay? So what my advice to you is if you want to shipwreck your faith is go with the opinions of others. Who cares what God or godly people say to you? Ignore your mom, your dad, or your grandfather, or perhaps it's your pastor, your counselor. You know better. Others are telling you to do something else.

Saul knew what God wanted of him regarding the Amalekites. But what would people think of Saul for not keeping the good treasure for himself? Because that's what people are going to ask you. How can you give up that time for God? It's so much better used elsewhere.

[24 : 36] Later on, and we know the story of David and Goliath. Goliath, the poor shepherd boy, shows up at the front lines delivering armor. They put an armor on him. He doesn't go. Takes a sling. Kills the giant that stands before him, and he's welcomed as a hero. And as he walked into the city, it says, as they were coming home, when David returned from striking down the Philistine, just a Philistine, that's it, the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing to meet King Saul with tambourines, with songs of joy, and with musical instruments. And the women sang to one another as they celebrated. And this is what they said. Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his ten thousands.

Okay? And notice what verse 8 says of Saul. And Saul was very angry, and this saying displeased him. He said, they have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed thousands. What more can he have but the kingdom? He's listening to silly girls singing silly songs in the streets, and he's allowing that to affect his mood. So my advice to you is, if you want to shipwreck your faith, let the voices of the crowd sway you. The people who do not know you, let the opinions of those who speak lies affect your mood, your attitude, your attitude, and ultimately your purpose. So if you want to shipwreck your faith, make sure everyone likes you. Their approval is far more important than God's.

Ignore the warning of Proverbs which says, fear of man leads to compromise and spiritual destruction. That can't happen all the time, can it? So if you want to shipwreck your faith, start strong.

Ignore God completely. Then ignore God completely. Build your identity on other people's opinion. And third, act first.

Then pray later, if at all. All. Right? 1 Samuel 13. They're about to go into battle, and Samuel tells Saul, I want you to wait because I am going to offer sacrifices before the battle.

[27 : 14] However, Saul grows impatient, and he breaks the code. The code is no one except for a priest is allowed to offer the sacrifices. The kings were never allowed to go in and offer the sacrifices.

However, he grew impatient waiting for Samuel, so he did it himself and offered burnt offering himself, violating the divine order. See, one of the designs that God into place had put into his kingdom is there was to be a separation between the king and the function of the priests.

So in 1 Samuel 13, chapter 13, verses 13, it says, And Samuel said to Saul, You have done foolishly.

You have not kept the commandment of the Lord your God with which he commanded you. For then the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever.

But now your kingdom shall not continue. The Lord has sought out a man after his own heart, and the Lord has commanded him to be prince over his people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you.

[28 : 32] You want to shipwreck your faith? Why wait on God when you can force things to happen in your timeline and in your own way?

If you want to shipwreck your faith, don't pray. You know what praying does? Praying is actually a sign of humility that you actually depend on God, that you depend on his power, that you depend on his wisdom, that you depend on his grace.

Why bother? You're you. You want to shipwreck your faith? Ignore God. Ignore his ways. You're strong. Depend on your own wisdom. Depend on your own power.

Come on. It's only the creator of the universe who's spoken to you. The fact of the matter is, acting without seeking God's lead can lead to irreversible consequences.

So if you're here and you're considering deconstructing your faith, I pray that I'm giving you some wisdom on how to do it.

[29 : 44] One, start strong. Ignore God completely. Two, build your identity on people's opinions of you. Three, act first, pray later, if at all. And four, hold grudges and let jealousy consume you.

These are great things for shipwrecking your faith. When David returned from battle with Goliath after slaying him, David's popularity began to grow, and it sparked Saul's jealousy.

And as I said, as the women sang, Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his ten thousands. 1 Samuel 18.9 says, And Saul eyed David from that day on.

He'd only killed one person. Mind you, he was a big person. But one, but he's listening. Paul, Saul has been the hero. He's wiped out the Philistines.

He's won great victories with the Ammonites. From that point forward in 1 Samuel 19, Saul wants David dead.

[30 : 52] See, the lesson is clear, my friends. If you want to shipwreck your faith, never celebrate other people's successes. Always see their successes as a threat to you.

When someone else succeeds in your life of ministry, see to it that you lessen their value. Focus on what you have done.

Saul was so good at it that he allowed his jealousy and bitterness to consume him, which isolated him from his family and his advisors.

Why do I advise you to do this? Because bitterness and jealousy are corrosive. Destroying is a potent corrosive that can destroy relationships, and they distort judgment.

So if you want to shipwreck your faith, my advice is hold grudges and be jealous. All right. Here's the fifth piece of advice that I have for you.

[31 : 55] Surround yourself with people who will tell you what you want to hear. Surround yourself with people who will tell you what you want to hear. In 1 Samuel 28, At this point, Saul is on the outs with God.

Verse 5 says, When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly. And when Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord did not answer him.

But his servants gave him a piece of advice. Behold, there is a medium at Endor. Go see her. Now, if you are familiar with the law of Moses, seeking out a medium is specifically forbidden by God.

That is, speaking with demons. So when you know that you are clearly disobeying the word of the Lord, get advice from someone else.

What better than your friends or other people that are experiencing the same sin as you? They can be of great comfort to you. They're not going to challenge you.

[33 : 11] Avoid the godly people in your life. Those people that you would spend time with. Because as soon as you start feeling guilty around them, you're going to start to think, well, our relationships change.

We're really not that good of friends. When the reality is, it's the sin in your life that's creating that barrier. It's the sin that's become an idol that you do not want to give up.

So you're going to make up all sorts of reasons. I'm busy. I've got other things going on. There's those other people that I like better.

Don't ask people who are going to make you feel guilty, who will encourage you to stop and listen to the Lord.

And if you really want to drive this point home, attack those who don't support you. Demonize them. Gossip about them.

[34 : 11] Oh man, they're so legalistic. Can you believe that? So legalistic. Attempt to ruin their reputation.

That's what Saul did. In 1 Samuel 22, there was a group of priests that helped David. Saul and his jealousy had them killed because they supported David.

85 people died because they did not listen to Saul. 1 Samuel 22, 19 and says, Nob, the city of the priests, he put to the sword, both man and woman, child and infant, ox, donkey, and sheep, he put to the sword.

Go to war with those who love you. Go to war with those who want the best for you spiritually. It is a clear-cut way to shipwreck your faith.

So my final piece of advice is avoid people who challenge you spiritually. Stick with those who agree with you in your every decision, especially regarding your sin.

[35 : 25] Stay away from godly counsel. The sixth way to shipwreck your faith, and this is tried and true the world over, blame everyone else for your mistakes.

Blame everyone else for your mistakes. It's never your fault. It's how you were raised. You didn't have the privilege of these people. I didn't come from a good Christian home.

My elder let me down at the grocery store when he got mad at the turnstile. I guess the word is cashier. It's the others.

It was the time of day. You were forced to feel that way. You were overly tired. It was your spouse and your children that frustrated you. In 1 Samuel 13, when Saul is confronted with offering sacrifices to the Lord, he tells Samuel that the people were scattering.

And the reason why, Samuel, I went in and offered those sacrifices even though God told me not to is, you were late. You were late. The people were impatient.

[36 : 38] They were after me. Saul, let's get on to battle. I know God says never to do it. But what people think is far more important, he actually tells Samuel, if you would have noticed, in 1 Samuel 15, that it was the people who spared the best of the sheep.

It wasn't him. It was the people. In 1 Samuel 14, Saul is going to battle and he wants to do this, what he thinks is this Christian thing.

I don't know, Christian thing. That would be a wrong thing to say. How would I describe it? But he makes this oath. He wants to seem holier. We're going to do something for God. We're going to battle. I'm going to make this oath.

No man in the land is going to eat before we go to battle. Do you guys remember that story? Well, what happens is his son Jonathan didn't hear the command.

Guess what? He was hungry and he had to have something to eat. So instead of blaming himself for making up this oath, God never asked him to make that oath.

[37 : 49] And you're going to read in the Old Testament and you've got to be very clear when you read a lot of these oaths. Always determine, did God ask them to make that oath or did they make that oath on their own?

Because then there's a lot of people who feel constrained to the oath that God never gave them. So here's Jonathan and instead of taking responsibility for his foolish oath, he ostracizes his son.

Never ever confront your insecurity with truth. Never ever. If you want to shipwreck your faith, truth is an inconvenience.

God's word is an inconvenience. Drop out of the Bible study group. Drop out of the men's group, the women's group. Drop out from meeting your cherished friends. Because the truth is just going to frustrate you.

Default to your pride. Say, how dare that person speak to me in that way? So if you want to shipwreck your faith, mistakes, they're not your fault.

[39 : 03] Always make sure you have someone else to blame. Because without accountability, there will never be any serious growth or change in your life.

And if you want to shipwreck your faith, you don't want to grow, you don't want to change, right? You're happy with the shipwreck, the descent away from the faith. And finally, I share with you the final way to totally shipwreck your faith.

It's to drift slowly into desperation and isolation. When we get to 1 Samuel 31, Saul's unchecked disobedience, his jealousy, and his fear lead him to what is a lonely and tragic death.

This was a man who was anointed by God. This was a man who prophesied in the name of God. This is a man who did great things.

But Saul's descent into shipwrecking his faith started with 1 Samuel 13, 14. He says, The Lord has sought out a man after his own heart because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you.

[40 : 32] Don't fool yourself into thinking that if you pursue your sin, God is somehow going to bless you. That all of a sudden you're going to have a great, wonderful marriage.

You're going to have a great, wonderful relationship with your coworkers or with your children or even with your parents if you persist in this sin.

1 Samuel 15, 23, Samuel writes, Because you have rejected the Lord, he has also rejected you from being king. Eventually, Saul was tormented by a harmful spirit, attempted to murder David, alienated his son, Jonathan.

Let's be honest, I think any father here when you read the story of Jonathan would love to have a son like Jonathan. He becomes obsessed with justifying himself by hunting David, consults evil spirit, and sadly, dies alone on the battlefield.

Read along with me in 1 Samuel 31. Now the Philistines were fighting against Israel, and the men of Israel fled before the Philistines and fell slain at Mount Gilboa.

[42 : 02] And the Philistines overtook Saul and his sons. And the Philistines struck down Jonathan and Abinadab and Malchai Shua, the sons of Saul.

Here's a warning. Your rebellion, your shipwrecking of your faith doesn't just affect yourself. It also destroys the lives of good people.

The battle pressed hard against Saul and the archers found him and he was badly wounded by the archers. Then Paul said to his armor bearer, Draw your sword and thrust me through with it lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through and mistreat me.

But his armor bearer would not for he feared greatly. Therefore Saul took his own sword and fell upon it.

How did he ever get there to be alone with no one with him? The same way you can get there by ignoring the warning signs.

[43 : 22] Keep going down the wrong path until you are completely alone and overwhelmed. The fact of the matter is spiritual neglect leads to ruin, despair, and isolation.

If I could give you a summary of Saul's descent it is this. Spirit isolation began when he disobeyed God and God's spirit left him and Saul abandons him.

We've even read about his desperation. He keeps clinging. He reaches out to the cloak which rips off and he's begging Samuel to come and affirm him. But Samuel knows it's not true repentance.

The next step is relational isolation. He alienates David who was with him all the way. David was never rebellious against Saul.

Even when he had opportunities to kill him David chose not to. Jonathan who alienated him because he loved David and he knew that David was blessed than his family and his servants.

[44 : 40] What's interesting there's a descent even those at the very end who were duty bound to obey him did not obey him. Even then they knew it was dishonorable to obey Saul.

The third step was moral isolation. His paranoia and cruelty drive him to commit heinous acts as we read killing families of priests.

the moral isolation leads to desperate actions. He resorts to forbidden practices showing his spiritual ruin and finally he experiences a lonely death.

He dies abandoned and disgraced a tragic end to a life marked by disobedience and fear. Saul's story in 1 Samuel is a tragic book.

It is a sobering warning about how unchecked pride unchecked sin and disobedience can slowly lead to desperation and isolation.

[46 : 00] next Sunday I want to contrast this story with the life of David who committed heinous sins yet instead of digressing and turning into himself turned towards God.

My friends if you are on that road now I am pleading with you to repent I am pleading for you to bring your sin into the light to confess your sin to go to a trusted brother a trusted sister a pastor elder we are here for you we are not here to judge you we are here to bring you the good news that no matter what sin you have committed or how far down that road you can go God can still use you God can still pull you back you guys probably don't know but one of my cherished mentors is in the news because he had a relationship with a woman who is not his wife it's a man who is 73 he's known around the world as probably one of the greatest preachers that one could hear in fact if I struggled with a passage and how the gospel related to that passage would be one of his sermons

I would turn to some of his writings have been the most influential in my life and now the reports from his elders is he is hiding away in a state refusing to come home I don't want that for me I don't want that for anybody I don't want it to be that you're so embarrassed you can't face your children your parents your spouse that's the amazing thing about the gospel it covers up every sin the blood of Jesus Christ is right enough for everybody doesn't matter how dark and ugly your sin is Jesus even welcomes the thief on the tree let me pray for you

Lord Heavenly Father I just pray that we would see this life before us unravel it is a tragic life it was a life that began with an anointing by you how much any of us would desire such a an honoring thing to know that we've had oil poured over us and know we are anointed to a task and to see the hand of God in our lives the blessing and yet to choose our own sin to choose the to worship the sin of our preference Father one of the lies that Satan always uses is he brings in this thing called shame he lies and tells us that the sins we've committed are too great to be forgiven and sometimes the root sin that is in our life leads to so many other branches and often times we we try to fix these branches but we don't understand we've got a root cause for our disobedience father

I pray that as if we go forward into this this city of Squamish this great unchurched city we desire to bring our sin to light we desire to confess we desire to be made right in your eyes father I pray that we would come forward to ask for your repentance as Samuel advised the people to put away other gods that they played with even though they worshipped Yahweh they still kept these little wooden figures these symbolisms of the other gods father I pray that we would throw those worldly things away could be things that bring us great comfort it could be food could be TV could be anything that we use as a substitute for you it can even be the entertainment of skiing or mountain biking sports it could be never confronting our children with their sin because we are so afraid they won't talk to us anymore father

[51 : 32] I ask that you would call us back to the old paths the right paths father I pray that you would turn us into a community that desires your blessing in everything that we do to reaching these not only the unchurched but those who are so desperate for truth those who are so lost in their sin that are held prisoners by whether it be pornography or gossip or food or anything father I pray that we would be willing to sacrifice those idols to be able to sit at the banquet table with you without any shame let today be the day that we cry out and ask him for repentance and that we would confess and come back to you and bring accountability into our lives so that we may walk faithfully with you and

I pray that this is the prayer of everyone here this day we ask these things your most holy and precious name amen