

God's Promises

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[0 : 00] Good afternoon. I'm going to try and get my act together here. Okay. It's good to be back together. Thank you for your friendship. I'm still not put together.

The friendship we have with you is I just feel like we picked up where we left off 17 months ago, except my best friend got to come with me this time. And it's just so good to be with all of you.

And we look forward to getting some more time together. I'm going to talk this afternoon about God's promises. And again, this is, you might say, what do God's promises have to do with family?

And I would say just about everything, because once again, this is an exploration of who God is and what the practical implications of God's character is on all of us. And this is in the theme of Deuteronomy chapter six, where Moses says, I'm telling you what I've learned so that you'll tell your family. And it's important for all of us to understand more deeply all the time who God is and what he's done, not just for our own souls, but for the sake of our family, as we help our children grow, leave the home and navigate, navigate this world.

An important part of that is understanding God's promises. And there's good news and bad news here this afternoon. The good news is that God keeps his promises. The bad news is God keeps his promises.

[1 : 42] And I say bad news because it is the human condition to presume upon God that maybe he didn't really mean it. Or he meant it, but not necessarily for me. The understanding that God never changes and that he keeps his promises, and there's no mystery regarding his reaction to disobedience, for example, should drive us to pay attention. And that truth should drive your children to pay attention.

That God has, if you want a formula, his expectation is that we trust and that we obey, and that when we do that, there are certain consequences, and they're good. And God keeps those promises. But there's also the reality that when you don't trust and you don't obey, there are consequences to that also. And what happens on this mortal coil is sometimes those consequences don't seem to happen. Sometimes that chain of, particularly with a young person, but this is true for all of us, that there's an area in our life where there's disobedience, and there seems to be no consequence. Or there's disobedience, and not only is there no consequence, but there seems to be great blessing. And that feeds this perception that maybe God doesn't keep all of those promises. And what I want you to see today, and all of us to embrace today, is that it is good news that God keeps his promises, but it also is very serious, and for some, bad news, that God keeps his promises. It's important as we evaluate our personal life, the life of our family, it's also helpful as we view the world around us and the events in the world around us, as it so often appears that the wicked are winning. The wicked are having their way.

That there seems to be no consequence to violating God's laws wholesale. And the answer to that is no. God indeed does keep his promises, just not necessarily the way we would or when we would. And I would like you to turn in your Bibles to 2 Peter chapter 3.

2 Peter chapter 3. And again, as you're turning there, just as a reminder that this session really is for the parents, for you to learn, review, remember maybe. There may be nothing new in the session today, but it is good to remember and then to consider how do we pass along this knowledge, this understanding to our family. 2 Peter chapter 3 addresses the folks that Peter was writing to who were waiting for the day of the Lord to come. Some of us have talked about this in the last day or two, waiting for the judgment of God to happen. I don't know about all of you, but I look forward to that day. But then when you start thinking about the implications of that day, you start to think, well, wait, maybe I'm not urgent for that day. Because on that day, all the promises are kept.

The righteous are taken to heaven and they're only righteous because of the work of Jesus Christ. The wicked are judged. That's a promise that will be kept. And the church that Peter's writing to here is anxious for that to happen. And the people around them are mocking them. They're saying, what, you keep telling us that Jesus is coming and he hasn't come. Where is God?

[5 : 45] That is very, very similar to the culture, at least where I live, that we live in right now. And starting in verse 1, I'm going to read all of this for a little bit of context. This is now, beloved, the second letter I'm writing to you in which I'm stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder that you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and the Savior spoken by your apostles, the teaching, the word of God. Remember, remember, remember. He's calling them to remember. Verse 3, know this first of all, that in the last days, mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts and saying, where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation. For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that not by the word of God, notice that by the word of God, excuse me, the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water by water through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water.

But by his word, the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. It's a pretty heavy passage. It's basically saying, mockers will question, are questioning, is God real? Where is your God? None of this judgment stuff has happened. And he reminds them of the flood. And we talked about the flood briefly in a previous session that the flood happened and the world was judged and those people didn't believe it was going to happen either. But God keeps his promises. Verse 8, but do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord, one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years is like one day. The Lord is not slow about his promise as some count slowness, but is patient towards you, not wishing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance. Verse 10, but the day of the Lord will come like a thief in which the heavens will pass away with the roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat. There's a whole bunch of promises there. And Peter is restating what they know from the prophets and from the teaching of the apostles. This day is coming.

And he describes what will be real global warming. The day of the Lord will come like a thief and the earth will be burned up with fire. That's the global warming people really need to be concerned about.

And then verse 14, therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by him in peace, spotless and blameless, and regard the patience of our Lord as license to sin. Is that what it says?

It's what our culture says. And for all too many people, including in the church, people view the patience of the patience of the Lord as license. Maybe not intentionally. But the patience of the Lord should be viewed as salvation. It's grace. By God holding off judgment, he hasn't forgotten.

[9 : 33] He hasn't softened. He's not changing his mind. He's giving room for repentance, for salvation. You see, time belongs to our creator. It belongs to God. He created it. He measures it.

He completes it. God doesn't respond to time. Time responds to God. Does it sound familiar to what we talked about last night? We're going back to who God is. Our expectations, our hopes, and our desires regarding the time and timing of anything does not impose on God. He does what he does when he's going to do it. His timing imposes on us. We should never question God's timing. He is slow or he missed it.

That is an arrogance of the human condition to think that we could question God's timing. God, you promised X in the Bible. Why can't I have that? Why not now? And to the extent that God's timing frustrates us, it really just exposes sin or pride, not his weakness. It's ours. That frustration exposes a selfishness when we understand that the slow response of God is due to patience on God's part, perhaps for the benefit of someone other than you and I. We live in a world where we would love to see the judgment of God, and we can even help him know which ones to judge, can't we?

And what we don't understand is that patience of God is holding off maybe for that person to repent, but certainly to give them the opportunity. You think of the nation of Israel, the nation of Israel under Pharaoh.

They're in captivity for hundreds of years, being murdered, being tortured, being starved, all of it under the hand of God. He knew exactly what he was doing. It wasn't about the nation of Israel.

[11 : 47] It was about the repentance of Pharaoh. We're going to see that in our next session. So when we're waiting for the justice of God to finally be displayed, we need to be concerned with our own sin and let God take care of them. And we need to be very, very careful about directing our ire on behalf of God towards anybody because God hasn't missed it. He's at work.

You know, in these verses, verse 9, the Lord is not slow about his promises. Some count slowness, but is patient towards you, not wishing for anyone to perish, but for all to come to repentance.

That is the heart of a loving God. It doesn't replace that he's also an angry God. And the anger of God comes out in the judgment of God later on. But for now, we're waiting for repentance. And then verse 14, the focus then is not on them. It says, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by him in peace, spotless, and blameless. You are to pursue obedience to the word of God. That's your focus. That obedience, we're to be found by him, spotless, and blameless. That is keeping his commandments. The second theme there is repentance.

The Lord is not slow about his promise. He's looking for repentance. And the repentance, by the way, is demonstrated by holy living. That is what repentance is. Repentance is not words.

It's action. Obedience in the place of disobedience. That's applicable and relevant in the discipline in your home, and that's applicable to all of us. Acts chapter 2, verse 38, Peter says to them, the new church, repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the Holy Spirit. Repentance is a element of your salvation.

[13 : 59] Paul in Acts 26, verse 20 says that they are to repent and turn to God, performing deeds consistent with repentance. So repentance starts with confession and results in obedience.

And that is what you and I before the Lord are responsible for in our own heart. And what everybody else does, the Lord has that. He's got it. And there's promises embedded in all these verses and the commands to obey and repent. For example, it says, for this applies to every person. There's a promise there. That every person either repents or they don't. And if they repent, there's heaven. And if they don't, there's hell. That is a promise.

God will bring to, will bring every act judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it's good or evil, that's a promise. The Lord is not slow about that promise. And we are to regard that patience as salvation. So we see, excuse me, we tend to see the commands to obey. And we may notice the need to repent, even if we don't understand what that means. But we possibly completely miss the promise or the promises associated with these commands. If you confess with your mouth, Jesus Christ is Lord and believe in your heart that he rose from the dead, you will be what? Saved. That is a promise.

Now I want to illustrate all of this. I want to illustrate, I'm going to tell you a story. It spans centuries. It's out of the Bible that illustrates the patience of the Lord in ways that are pretty unique. The story I want to share with you is really an illustration of our need to fear God, to obey God, and to repent of our disobedience. And in all of that, to understand that when that doesn't happen, God keeps his promises. And I want to note the promises associated with obedience, disobedience, repentance, and rebellion. If you would, and if you want, you turn in your Bible to 1 Samuel chapter 15. And 1 Samuel 15 is kind of the touch point of a very big story. So I will be going all over outside of 1 Samuel 15. But if you want to park in one place, where we're going to keep coming back to is that chapter. 1 Samuel chapter 15 ties together obedience, repentance, and the dual characteristics, if you will, of God, his unchanging holiness and patience, and how he interacts with obedience and repentance. We're going to look back in history to see that

God means what he says, and he says exactly what he means. He makes promises, and he keeps promises, even if there's generations of people watching this who firmly believe he's never going to keep that promise, or he forgot to keep that promise. And this should be a great comfort as we look to the future. I have to say this, if you're here today and you're not saved, you have not repented of your sins, you should be very concerned. Because the case that gets made is God keeps those promises too.

[17 : 41] So we're going to look at the life of King Saul as an illustration of 2 Peter 3 and the connection between all of these elements. Saul's failure that you're going to hear about wasn't just his disobedience. His great failure was a failure to repent. It was his arrogance and ignoring God's promises evidenced by the failure to repent after several opportunities and years and years and years of opportunity and the long-suffering patience of a holy God giving Saul at every turn the opportunity to do the right thing. And it's a cautionary tale. This story involves a nation, the Amalekites, and a second nation, Israel. It deals with two kings, Saul and Agag. And the timing of God's keeping these promises is puzzling. It's kind of problematic. It's confusing. I can tell you all of that's true because I went on a hunt to put this story together and it took some work.

And until you understand 2 Peter 3 and the patience of God, it doesn't make a whole lot of sense. It's a big story with a lot of details. And I don't want you to get caught up in the details. I want you, in some sense, to enjoy the story because it's not really a story about Saul and Agag and the Amalekites.

The story, of course, is about who? About God and how we should view him and understand him. Let me start reading 1 Samuel 15, verse 1.

Samuel is reminding Saul that you are in the position you're in because God put you here.

By the way, that's true of Mr. Biden in my country and Mr. Trudeau in your country. And every other person who rules a nation is put there by God.

[19 : 55] Samuel is reviewing that with Saul. Now, therefore, he says, listen to the words of the Lord. Thus says the Lord of hosts, I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he set himself against him on the way while he was coming up from Egypt.

Now go and strike Amalek and utterly destroy all that he has and do not spare him, but put to death both man, woman, child, and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.

Is there any confusion there? There might be some shock. He is saying utterly wipe out this nation. Not just the people, but the animals.

Wipe it all out. It's not confusing. There's no ambiguity here, but there might be some questions on why in the world would the Lord command that.

And it's an important part of the story. 1 Samuel 15 doesn't explain that, but the rest of the Bible, parts of the Bible explain the history, and it gives a pretty strong clue.

[21 : 11] So let's talk about who the Amalekites were. The Amalekites had some history. Amalek refers to the name of the nation's founder who was a grandson of Esau.

They hated Israel, and they were committed to the destruction of Israel and the death of Israel. Hebrews 12, 16 called them immoral and godless. Obadiah 18 says there will be no survivors in the house of Amalek.

Now, in 1 Samuel 15, it says, it calls Amalek him. I just want you to understand, that's a reference to the nation.

For example, Russia is called the bear. And the similarity here would be kill the bear. Okay? So Amalek is referring to the first king of the Amalekites.

That's how the nation was referenced. And I just wanted to say that to make very clear, as you look through scripture, that the Amalekites were linked to that person, and were about to be introduced to the current king of the Amalekites, a man named Agag.

[22 : 23] So the Amalekites, back to them. They had a well-known history. The history really begins, the record in the Bible, the first time they're mentioned, is in Exodus 17, when the nation of Israel has been rescued from Egypt, and they're now wandering through the wilderness, being led by God.

They've watched the Red Sea part. They've crossed the Red Sea. They watched Pharaoh and his armies destroyed. And on they go, and here come the Amalekites.

Verse 8. Amalek came and fought against Israel at Rephidim. So Moses said to Joshua, this is the same Moses who preached the sermon that we looked at Friday night.

Moses said to Joshua, choose men for us and go out and fight against Amalek. Tomorrow I will station myself on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand. Joshua did as Moses told him and fought against Amalek.

And Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. So it came about when Moses held his hand up that Israel prevailed. And when he let his hand down, Amalek prevailed.

[23 : 36] Why? I have no idea. It's one of these stories in the Bible. It's just interesting. As long as Moses had his hands up, Israel prevailed.

What do you think happens to your arms after you do this for a while? They get tired. And so he would drop his hands and Israel would start to lose. Verse 12.

Moses' hands were heavy. Then they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. And Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side and one on the other. Thus his hands were steady until the sun set.

You get the picture? They're holding his arms up for him. Why? They want to win. The Amalekites are trying to annihilate them. Verse 13.

So Joshua overwhelmed Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. Verse 14. And the Lord said to Moses, write this in a book as a memorial and recite it to Joshua that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven.

[24 : 41] Did you hear that? It's a promise. I will utterly blot out, wipe out, the memory even of Amalek from under heaven.

Verse 15. Moses built an altar and named it the Lord is my banner. And he said, the Lord has sworn. The Lord will have war against Amalek from generation to generation.

So the promise is, there's going to be a lot of war and at the end of it all, Amalek's going to be wiped out. They're doomed to obliteration and extinction.

If you're an Amalekite, do you think you want to change teams? I would. The question arises, why didn't God just do it? If he's going to do it, why doesn't he just do it?

They're right there. Moses' arms are tired. That doesn't matter to God, does it? God could have done it right there. He didn't do it. If he was going to keep his promise, why not right now?

[25 : 44] Because he's God. And you've already heard from 2 Peter the answer to that question. But let's keep going. Deuteronomy 25. Moses' sermon, towards the end of his life, same series of sermons that we talked about Friday night, he's reminding the people of the treachery of the Amalekites.

He's about to die. And one of his parting messages to the nation of Israel revolves around and involves, is directed about the Amalekites. He said this, remember what Amalek did.

Remember, he talks about the nation as a person. Amalek refers to a nation. Remember what Amalek did to you along the way when you came out from Egypt.

He's referring to the story I just told you from Exodus 17. How he met you along the way and attacked among you all the stragglers at your rear when you were faint and weary and he did not fear God.

Therefore it shall come about when the Lord your God has given you rest from all your surrounding enemies in the land which the Lord your God gives you as an inheritance to possess. You shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven.

[26 : 54] You must not forget. Don't forget. Do what the Lord's told us to do. What the Lord has promised will happen.

So, the question is, again, why didn't God do it then? Moses knows he hasn't and he reminds the nation and then he dies.

Now, all of this was known by Saul. All of this was known by the nation of Israel. So, when we go back to 1 Samuel 15 now and we read, now go and strike Amalek and utterly destroy all that he has and do not spare him but put to death both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.

There is tremendous clarity there. There's history. This is the prophet of God instructing the king of Israel the time is now.

What God commanded all the way back in Exodus, today's the day. So, let's go through now this story. Saul summoned the people and numbered them in Talaim, 200,000 foot soldiers and 10,000 men of Judah.

[28 : 15] Saul came to the city of Amalek and set an ambush in the valley. Saul said to the Kenites, go, depart, go down from among the Amalekites so that I do not destroy you with them.

For you showed kindness to all the sons of Israel when they came up from Egypt. That's a whole other story. We won't go down that trail. It's interesting. So, the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites.

In other words, it's just like today. Israel drops leaflets downtown Beirut and says, we're about to wipe out some bad guys. Get out if you're a good guy. It's exactly what they're doing here.

Verse 7, so Saul defeated the Amalekites from Havilah as you go to Shur, which is east of Egypt. He captured Agag the king. Ding, ding, ding. That's a problem, isn't it?

What was he supposed to do with Agag? Kill him. It's pretty clear. But he captured Agag, the king of the Amalekites, alive and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword.

[29 : 18] But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good and were not willing to destroy them utterly. But everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed.

We know from history, which we're going to look at a little bit this morning, there's a lot more that they didn't wipe out. That last verse, that last phrase, everything they considered despised and worthless, they annihilated.

Anything they didn't view that way, including people, they let live. They did not do, Saul did not do what he was supposed to do. He did some of what he was told to do.

But he's not credited with obedience when he only partially obeys. He was. In fact, disobedient. And that's in verse 10, God's assessment of Saul's obedience.

He says, Then the word of the Lord came to Samuel, saying, I regret that I've made Saul king, for he has turned his back from following me and has not carried out my commands. Now you might say, Whoa, God didn't keep his promises because Saul didn't do it.

[30 : 33] God's will was altered. It's not what happened. God's will is never altered. His purposes are never deviated.

Saul missed out on the opportunity to be the man that did what God called him to do. So God says, I regret it. I regret that I made him king. And Samuel was distressed and cried out to the Lord all night.

For parents, this might be a bit comforting to you. You will see as the story goes along that Samuel was far more distressed by Saul's sin than Saul ever was.

It's like being a parent sometimes, isn't it? You're far more distressed over your child's sin than they ever are. That's Samuel. And he rose early in the morning, verse 12 says, to meet Saul.

And it was told Samuel, saying, Saul came to Carmel and behold, he set up a monument for himself and then turned and proceeded on down to Gilgal. Partial disobedience is disobedience.

[31 : 38] Disobedience here is turning his back on following Christ. It says that. And Saul was so impressed with the work that he did do, he built himself a monument. And what he didn't realize is that was really going to be a monument of his foolishness and his disobedience.

Samuel was far more distressed about the sin than Saul was and it becomes evident as you work through this story and we're not going to go through in detail, but he confronts Saul four times in a series of conversations.

And the first confrontation is answered by Saul. Verse 15, he says, they have brought them out from the Amalekites for the people spared the best of the sheep and oxen to sacrifice to the Lord your God, but the rest we have utterly destroyed.

It's like a six-year-old. I didn't do it. My sister did it. She did it. Ever heard that, parents? Saul is the most powerful king of the most powerful country on the face of the earth at the time and he's acting like a six-year-old.

And he thinks God doesn't know. He lied. So sin upon sin, he shifts blame and he tries to sanctify his sin.

[32 : 56] And he says, we didn't kill everything so that we could sacrifice to God. Okay? Then he's confronted a second time. You can see that in verses 16 through 21.

Samuel rehearses history for Saul in response and says, you were nothing and the Lord made you a king and God sent you on a mission and you disobeyed. And he calls his disobedience evil in the sight of the Lord.

And Saul lies again. He says, I did obey. I went on the mission. God said, go. And I went. And he thinks that's obedience.

And he says, some people, some people took the spoil. The third confrontation starts in verse 22. You've heard these words.

Samuel said, has the Lord as much 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.

[34 : 02] For rebellion is as the sin of divination or witchcraft. That's what that means. And insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has rejected you from being king.

There's a promise. Samuel just made a promise. On behalf of God, he's been rejected as king. And Saul said to Samuel, I have sinned.

And that made it all better. Nope. He says, I've sinned. I have indeed transgressed the command of the Lord and your words. There's confession because I feared the people and listened to their voice.

Now, therefore, please pardon my sin and return with me that I may worship the Lord. That all sounds great. But that's not repentance. That's not repentance.

So in verse 28, and I'm sure Saul missed that. He didn't understand that. Verse 28, Samuel said to him, The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to your neighbor who is better than you.

[35 : 08] Also, the glory of Israel will not lie or change his mind for he is not a man that he would change his mind. He's talking about God.

That's what we talked about last night. God doesn't change his mind and when he says it, it sticks. It's a promise. And the bad news is, for Saul, God keeps his promises.

That addresses the problem of disobedience and the evidence of repentance, but what about the promise of God here? There's a lot of promises in this story so far that have not been kept.

Saul, by the way, was still king for a long time. God did not remove him that day. So when Samuel says, The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today, Saul might be justified in his foolishness and assuming it didn't happen today.

Nothing changed. In fact, he went with Samuel up to worship the Lord. Agag is still alive. Agag had been promised death by God.

[36 : 26] He's still alive. And the Amalekites escaped and they lived to fight Israel and God another day, in fact, for a lot of days.

So far, none of the promises from a human standpoint have been kept. Are they empty promises? Well, we look at the rest of the story.

Agag, verse 32. Samuel said, Bring me Agag, king of the Amalekites. And Agag came to him cheerfully.

Cheerfully. And he says to Samuel, Surely the bitterness of death has passed. This is evidence that Agag believed that he didn't have to believe anymore that the promises of God were real.

He escaped. escaped. He's happy. The bitterness of death has passed. Verse 33. Well, before I say that, he misread the patience of the Lord.

[37 : 32] We know from 2 Peter, why was Agag still alive? Because God wanted him to be. And why did God want him to be alive?

So that he would what? Repent. That's all he needed to do. And when you read this story, it's really easy to race through it and say, what a harsh God.

I mean, you wipe out the children, the babies, the men, the women, the animals. What a harsh God. And really, when you look at it, the grand sweep of history, we're talking about spans here of hundreds of years that God has not pulled the trigger.

When he finally does, you can't say that's an unloving God. You have to look back and understand he held off, he held off, he held off so that there would be repentance. Verse 33, Samuel said, as your sword has made women childless.

By the way, Agag was a really bad guy. I mean, a wicked dude. As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women.

[38 : 41] And Samuel hacked Agag to pieces before the Lord at Gilgal. Saul said all the right things, but he wouldn't do the one thing to demonstrate his repentance, which was to hack Agag to pieces.

I know that sounds really harsh, and that's why junior hires, by the way, love this story. If you work with youth, tell them this story. They love verse 33. And it's a great vehicle to learn a very important lesson.

You don't mess with God. And when you mess with God, and he doesn't pull the trigger, that doesn't mean he's not going to pull the trigger. What it means is you've got time to repent.

So, Agag now, who misread the patience of the Lord, has left the earth. Samuel has done what Saul would not do.

Samuel did what Saul had to do. Samuel did what Saul no longer could do. Saul could no longer demonstrate repentance because Samuel did it for him.

[39 : 54] It is a tragic thing to see that Saul is doomed from this point forward. But he's alive. What about Saul?

Well, we already saw that the what Samuel said to him in verse 29, the glory of Israel, God will not lie or change his mind for he is not a man that should change his mind.

And the Lord regretted that he had made Saul king and he had removed the kingdom from him. Saul knew Amalek had to be destroyed. He didn't believe God. He rebelled.

He knew better than God in that moment. He refused to believe what God said about the future and he rejected, it says, the word of the Lord. You see, Saul always knew better than God, but he's still taking in error and he's still king.

God hasn't kept his promise. Verse 34, Samuel went to Ramah, but Saul went up to his house at Gibeah of Saul. Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death, for Samuel grieved over Saul, and the Lord regretted that he had made Saul king over Israel.

[41 : 06] Saul went on to live a happy life. Must have been a terribly guilty life if he was a normal person, because the Amalekites kept coming and slaughtering the people of Saul's nation.

And every time that happened, Saul had to know, this wouldn't have happened if I did what God told me to do all the way back in 1 Samuel 15. Of course, that's not their calendar. I'm just saying that for our reference.

In 1 Samuel 30, the Amalekites are still a force. They're a growing force against Israel. And while David and the army were away from their families, the Amalekites came in and kidnapped all the women and children, including David's wives and children, and they burned the city.

They are still a problem for the nation of Israel. The Amalekites survived in 1 Samuel 15 thanks to Saul. and more on them in a few minutes.

But the rest of 1 Samuel 30 if you want to read it is about the rescue of the women and children from the Amalekites and the death of Saul. Saul dies and finally does lose his kingdom fighting none other than the Amalekites.

[42 : 25] And it's a delicious irony I suppose or a divine providence to put it in biblical terms the conditions of Saul's death.

In 2 Samuel chapter 1 it tells the story it says it came about after the death of Saul when David had returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites that David remained two days in Ziklag.

And then it describes a young man who wanders into the camp of David who tells him that King Saul and his son David's friend Jonathan had died. And here's his after action report if you will.

2 Samuel chapter 1 verse 5 So David said to the young man who told him how do you know that Saul and his son Jonathan are dead? The young man who told him said by chance I happen to be on Mount Gilboa and behold Saul the king was leaning on his spear and behold the chariots and the horsemen pursued him closely and when he looked behind him he saw me and he called to me and he said here I am or I said here I am and he said to me Saul says to this young man who are you?

And I answered him I am an Amalekite then he said to me please stand beside me and kill me for agony has seized me because my life still lingers in me so I stood beside him and I killed him because I knew that he could not live after he had fallen and I took the crown which was on his head and the bracelet which was on his arm and I have brought them here to my Lord and David said to the young man he told him where are you from and he answered I am the son of an alien and Amalekite and David killed him and if you want to know why David killed him you can read 1 Samuel 31 but Saul finally indeed lost his kingdom after 41 years as king God's timing God's way it took a long time and what's important to note is that Saul never repented in all that time the patience of the Lord was for salvation we learn that in 2 Peter

[44 : 49] Saul rejected it he ignored it and finally he received the promise at the hand of no none other than an Amalekite it's an irony from a human perspective and from a divine perspective that was probably always the plan why do I say that because that's what happened God isn't twisted and turned by time or politics or circumstances God does what God's going to do when God wants to do it he is God and we're not so Saul is gone Agag is gone Saul has lost his kingdom finally but what about God's promise to wipe out the Amalekites they continue to be a story he promised to wipe them off the face of the earth remember that well it took a while from our standpoint it probably took too long we can't say that because of

Saul's disobedience the Amalekites continued to be the enemy of Israel with terrible consequence Saul did not exterminate the Amalekites as he was told to they continue to live and procreate and grow and plague Israel and they participate in the demise of Saul and you think okay now it's time to end the Amalekites and it's not the time to end the Amalekites because they continue to go and 500 years later the Amalekites show up again in history in a book called Esther and if you remember the character of Haman and Esther Haman is in the court of the queen and his goal and he almost pulls it off his goal is to exterminate the Israelites the Jews he gets exposed and you can read this story he is deposed he is hung and that is the last mention of the Amalekites because they were annihilated shortly after that as punishment for Haman the details of their wipeout are not recorded in the Bible but today you will not find anybody who calls himself an Amalekite you cannot find and I have done this search

I'm just an accountant from Simi Valley so someone else is way more qualified to do this search but based on what I could find you cannot find a history of their destruction you cannot find any evidence that they are ever on this earth no one traces their lineage back to an Amalekite it's remarkable that what God said would happen happened they have been blotted out from the face of the earth they were wiped off the face of the earth why so long Lord well he was patient with them not wishing for them to perish but for all to come to repentance you see it's God's promises God's timing God's way and he never changes so I want to wrap up with some application some things to consider when you think about the promises of God and who God is and one thing the first thing

I want to take note of is we need to be careful we need to know the promises of God part of knowing God is knowing the promises of God and the other part and part of knowing the promises of God is not making promises that which is not a promise have you ever met somebody who is in great distress because they have not received what they thought they were promised from God they'll take scripture and twist it and say the Lord promised prosperity and I can't make rent you need to be careful with that kind of presumption on the promises of God you see we've learned this afternoon that God keeps his promises and if you really can find a place where God promises you prosperity God has to keep that promise the problem is we want to make things promises that might not be promises an example you don't have to turn there you know this verse

Psalms 37:4 says delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart that is quoted so often as a promise from the Lord that is not a promise from the Lord sounds like a promise from the Lord delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart what that really is is a command delight yourself in the Lord and if you are in the Lord the desires of your heart will completely line up with what God's doing that is not a name it and claim it verse that's a command to delight yourself in the Lord and the benefit of delighting yourself in the Lord is knowing wherever I am it's where he put me whatever my circumstances it's what he has for me and it may be illness and it may be poverty and it may be difficulty and it may be a rough family like BK was talking about this morning terrible situation in the family if I'm delighted in the

[50 : 41] Lord I have the comfort of knowing that the desires of my heart line up with the desires of his heart and I want to do his will be very very careful about reading scripture and claiming promises that might not be promises by claiming that God has to bend to the desires of my heart is stealing the glory from God and it's reducing who he is when the reality is the desires of my heart must bend to him must respond to him the second application is that you and I need to repent while we can we need to repent while we can take advantage of the patience of God if you don't know Christ here today you need to take advantage of the patience of God but don't bank on it too long don't bank on it another day

Romans 2:4 says do you think lightly of the riches of his kindness and tolerance and patience not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance but because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God promises repent don't be stubborn because if you are you store up wrath for yourself that's a promise that's our prayer for those who we know and yes family members who have not repented and when you start thinking about the gravity of that verse it softens your desire for the day of judgment doesn't it because if the Lord came today bringing that judgment with him today we all know people who we love they might be judged today do you really want that think about that third thing is don't mistake the patience of the Lord as God's endorsement of your life you know on a grand scale in the book of

Jonah we talked about Jonah so I'll reference this if you read Jonah the story of Nineveh one of the condemning aspects of Nineveh is they were one of the wealthiest if not the wealthiest to that date kingdoms on the face of the earth Jonah was sent to call them to repentance they were rejecting God because they were saying we don't believe anything God says because look at all the wealth and power we have if we were really that wicked would God have given us all this wealth and all this power and the answer to that is yes because he did and Jonah was coming to warn them you see you can't mistake the patience of the Lord as an endorsement of your life Romans 6:23 says and I'm choosing this because you all know this the wages of sin is death but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord that is an immovable truth of life and our children our families look at the world around them and they see godless awful human beings incredibly wealthy incredibly popular everyone wants to see pictures of them and hear what they have to say about everything and they can get confused and think well the wages of sin might not be death because look at these people that our culture elevates you see you can't mistake the patience of the

Lord as endorsement for their life and we need to be slow to correlate God's intentions to current events God does not react to me or my circumstances or my disobedience or my obedience when I think he should my life bends to and reacts to his timing to his character there's the issue of causation and correlation you ever heard these two terms causation is when two events are one is caused by the other correlation is they happen to happen at the same time and when events happen concurrently we tend to correlate them and I'll give you an example I've heard a man tell me I divorced my wife and my business took off and life got so much better and objectively he was right that's correlation the great danger in that man's life is he took correlation to events that did happen in that sequence and he ascribed to them causation because I sinned

I won that is a dangerous place it was true for Nineveh it was true for Saul it's true for that man that I was talking to and it's true for all of us that tend to confuse causation and correlation when someone commits sexual sin and they don't die on the spot that is correlation but is that causation and that might sound really silly to you but so many of us think that way that I sinned I sinned the worst sin and nothing happened I work a lot in white collar crime fraud and one of the biggest problems with a white collar criminal is when they get away with it because you know what they'll never view that as grace to repent they view that as license to go and sin some more and it's not just white collar criminals that is the human condition be careful of confusing correlation and causation the Amalekites could have seen

[57:13] Saul's disobedience as God's hand preserving them that is confusing correlation with causation they would not necessarily have ever had any reason to know any difference except we knew that God had condemned them all to death don't be an agag don't raise an agag someone who violates the law of God and claims surely the bitterness of death is past why I'm going to sin how I want to sin and it's not going to cause what God says it should cause don't be a Saul he saw his survival and continuing reign as God's endorsement he didn't believe God's promises or he believed the promises he wanted to you may know of sin in your life that correlates to great success correlates to delusion correlation is not causation it's simply the patience and the grace of God don't take the patience of God as license you take the patience of God as opportunity and this is the crying need for accountability you need and I need independent observation and the perspective of others we need a reminder from the word of

God regularly so many people fall into the patterns of sin and experience terrible consequences because they want to live in disobedience and they would justify it by not believing that God keeps his promises that God never changes you see we need each other sin makes us stupid not just our children it happens to all of us and part and part of that stupidity is ignoring the promises of God or seeing everything that God says about himself and not believing it don't do that his patience he's giving us time for repentance rather than an opportunity to sin some more and that is a time period that none of us knows when the end is coming and that perspective should permeate the thinking and the life of a family as we saw in

Deuteronomy we worship together and that worship is based on knowing the word of God who is God and what has he done we need to teach our children the precepts of God the character of God and as they evaluate current events and life and circumstances of life they might cause them to question does God keep his promises and if you can remember the story of Saul and Agag and the Amalekites tell them that story it's a great story to remind us that God's timing is not our timing but he never changes let's pray Lord thank you for your character thank you for who you are Lord forgive us for presuming on you so many times our opinions of why things around us are happening or why they're not happening Lord we understand and we believe that you are a holy God we are reminded today that your patience is the greatest expression of love not even necessarily for us as we watch a world going crazy around us but your patience is love and forgiveness or potential forgiveness for people who we think are the enemy and yet you are holding off your judgment for them

Lord give us that perspective that patience and that honor to you as we watch these events unfold Lord I do pray if there's anybody here this afternoon who does not know you Lord may they no longer view your patience as license but as an opportunity to repent for salvation as Peter said in 2 Peter 3 and we pray this in Christ's name amen amen